SALMON SWEEPSTAKES by ROBERT E. PINKERTON

25¢

Adventure

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

APRIL

ESCAPE TO PALEMBANG by E. HOFFMANN PRICE

A CARADOSSO STORY by F. R. BUCKLEY

RKO PRESENTS

THE TAMING OF THE TOUGHEST TOWN IN AMERICA!

U. S. Marshal "BAT" MASTERSON could outshoot any killer in the West . . . but this lusty, lawless Kansas town proved to be the deadliest threat to his fabulous career!

TRAIL STREET

STARRING

RANDOLPH SCOTT · ROBERT RYAN · GEORGE 'Gabby' HAYES · ANNE JEFFREYS

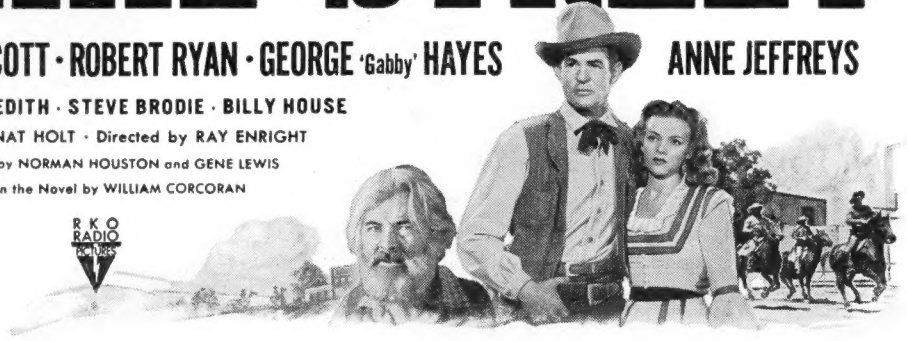
with MADGE MEREDITH · STEVE BRODIE · BILLY HOUSE

Produced by NAT HOLT · Directed by RAY ENRIGHT

Screen Play by NORMAN HOUSTON and GENE LEWIS

Based on the Novel by WILLIAM CORCORAN

RKO RADIO PICTURES



LAKE RESCUE STARTS THINGS MOVING . . .

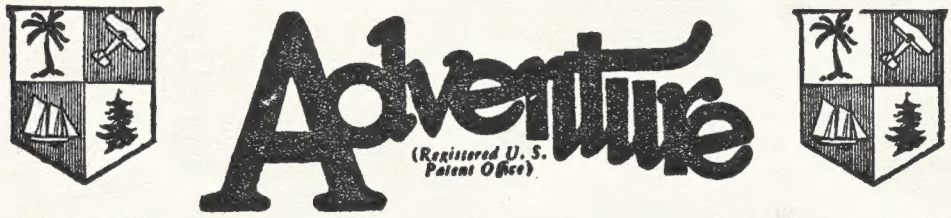
DICK WERTH, FLYING HIS HELICOPTER CITY-WARD AFTER ROUSHING IT IN A NORTHERN MICHIGAN CAMP, SIGHTS ICE-BOATERS MAROONED ON ICE FLOE IN LAKE HURON.

WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE TWO FAST TRIPS. THIS ICE LOOKS BAD. COME ON, MISS!
OUR CABIN'S ON THAT CLOSEST NECK OF LAND. MY DAUGHTER'LL POINT IT OUT

HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN MY HOBBY, AND NOW I HOPE TO START A FERRY SERVICE
WHY, DAD! THAT'S THE ANSWER TO YOUR INTER-PLANT TRAFFIC PROBLEM!
HE'S HANDSOME

FOR SLICK-LOOKING SHAVES THAT REALLY RATE, GET ACQUAINTED WITH THIN GILLETTES. THEY'RE THE SMOOTHEST-SHAVING, LOW-PRICED BLADES YOU EVER USED. THAT'S BECAUSE THIN GILLETTES FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR PRECISELY AND PROTECT YOU FROM THE HARSH, IRRITATING EFFECT OF MISFIT BLADES AND FAULTY SHAVING METHODS. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES
THIN Gillette BLADES
4 10

◆ ◆ ◆ **THE MAY ISSUE WILL**



Vol. 116, No. 6 **for** **Best of New Stories**

April, 1947

NOVELETTES

Escape to Palembang.....E. HOFFMANN PRICE 8

Carson had beaten his way out of Java just a jump ahead of Soekarno's Nationalists to find refuge in Pulau Panjang. Now all he wanted was a chance to work the tin he'd found—diggings so rich it paid to mine the stuff by hand. But the flames of Indonesian rebellion had spread even to the outlying islands so now—his *prahu's* bow pointed across the Sunda Sea for the Sumatra coast—Carson was in full flight once again. It seemed there was no place left in the post-war maelstrom of the East where a man could buckle down to work unmolested. It was all pretty discouraging until he spotted the solution. It had, of course, been right under his nose all the time. *Face*—it appeared—had to be kept as well as *faith*.

Of Deadly Weapons.....F. R. BUCKLEY 58

In which Luigi Caradosso, sometime Captain of the Guard, undertakes to advise His Grace Duke Pietro concerning the folly of trafficking with such charlatans as alchemists, astrologers, doctors of medicine and their ilk—with particular reference to the impostor who had the sublime impudence to offer His Lordship an "invincible weapon" allegedly capable of wiping out whole cities in the twinkling of an eye, thus causing wars to cease and depriving decent soldiery of their livelihood. Ha! The whole thing was preposterous.

SHORT STORIES

Pigs *Ain't* Pigs.....FRANKLIN GREGORY 48

The disappearance of Meredith Miller, drama critic on the *Herald*, caused a sensation at the office—and at the Blue Pencil Club, too. In over twenty years he'd never missed a day, or even been late. It was certainly odd, his vanishing so completely just after his unmerciful panning of Kitty O'Mara, the musical-comedy star, in his column. Phalen of the *Sun* and Stark of the *World-Telly* were likewise among the missing after burning the O'Mara. But of course there couldn't be any connection—or could there?

Beak-Busting Is Business.....WILLIAM HOLDER 78

"To me it looks like Malta," Joe Burke predicted before the Garden fight. "He's young and tough with a head like a fire hydrant and he keeps comin' in all night. You couldn't slow him down with a rifle." All of which sounded like straight dope to Coston, the big-shot gambler. And why shouldn't it? Wasn't Burke the guy who'd be in there with his dukes up facing Malta when the bell rang?

Published monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 2256 Grove Street, Chicago, 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter October 2, 1935, at the Post Office, at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1947, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Single copy 25 cents. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, $2.50; other countries, 75c additional. Send subscriptions to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional. Printed in the U. S. A.

BE OUT ON APRIL 11TH ◆ ◆ ◆

Fire Power ..... JOHN T. BUTCHER 109
When Old Jeb got the snapshot of his son in Navy whites astride a fourteen-inch battlewagon gun, he allowed as how the kid had finally got hold of a shootin' iron big enough to suit him. Which put him in mind of Young Jeb's first amphibious operation in the water tank down at the farm—and the croaker that wouldn't croak.

The Hacking Match ..... TIM PRIDGEN 112
No one rightly knew just when Jonah Rhyne had started hacking at Billie McVane. But for as long as they could remember the crowd at Duddery's Mill had heard Jonah's sharp tongue and sly jokes make a laughingstock of Billie. Seems like he couldn't ever seem to come out on top till the day he died. At his funeral, of course, he turned the tables of a lifetime . . . and the last laugh was on Jonah.

A Hound for Sleeping ..... JIM KJELGAARD 120
That hound my Cousin George bought from Mr. Tambley was an awful lot of dog for six dollars, but he sure wasn't much of a hunter. Some said he was so lazy he wouldn't even chase a field mouse caught in a packing-box. Then Eely Moxer bet George there wasn't *anything* that droopy dog would chase—and that's where Eely was wrong!

Certified Seaworthy ..... STEVE HAIL 124
Terence O'Boyle had seen better days—before these bitter ones. Captain Wight of the *Harawest* could see that when he signed on the little monkey-faced coal-passer—as broken-down as the old *Harawest* herself—to serve to heave fuel into the same furnace he'd once presided over as Chief Engineer. But perhaps Wight was mistaken in judging the man by the job—for at sea even a skipper may sometimes have to get below and fire a boiler.

THE SERIAL

Salmon Sweepstakes (1st of 3 parts) ..... ROBERT E. PINKERTON 86
"I put those humpies in the ocean and they're coming back to me!" boasted Don Cameron. "Next year I'll take half a million out of Chickwan." It sounded like big talk but Don was damn well going to reap the silver harvest he'd helped to plant—come fish pirates, crooked cannery operators or the toughest weather in Alaska!

FACT STORIES

A Head for Uncle Joe ..... EDWARD B. REYNOLDS 73
Headhunting was an ancient and honorable custom among the Jivaro Indians of the Amazon Basin. But it took an invasion of American GI's to put it on a big-business, production-line basis. Of course the natives were only too glad to oblige. Just a matter of Good Neighbor policy—and *Yanqui* $$$!

The Secret of the Bowie Knife ..... EVERETT M. WEBBER 131
The knife that Colonel James Bowie clutched in his hand when he died at the Alamo was the original bowie knife but, contrary to common belief, he didn't create it. It was made *for*—not *by*—Bowie and its true inventor, an obscure blacksmith, died a pauper having lost everything including the secret process by which he'd forged the famous "Arkansas toothpick."

VERSE

Night Sounds ..... S. OMAR BARKER 77
Unto the wilderness man is bound
By nostalgic chains of sound.

DEPARTMENTS

The Camp-Fire ..... Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6
Ask Adventure ..... Information you can't get elsewhere 139
Ask Adventure Experts ..... The men who furnish it 141
Lost Trails ..... Where old paths cross 144
The Trail Ahead ..... News of next month's issue 132

Cover painted for Adventure by Peter Stevens
Kenneth S. White, Editor

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

F. R. BUCKLEY'S new Caradosso novelette on page 58 of this issue marks that cinquecenti swashbuckler's first post-World-War-II appearance in these pages. It was neither sheer laziness on his part nor lack of prodding on ours that kept Mr. Buckley's typewriter dormant lo these many months. Other more important activities intervened. As he writes—from La Tour de Peilz (Vaud) Switzerland—explaining his long silence, "I've been playing soldier in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Czecho-Slovakia; invalided after V-E day and pretty ill, damn it, ever since. Recuperating nicely now, thank you, in this large room with one window looking out on an Alp and another on a lake. A big woodburning porcelain stove, breakfast in bed with all the services and all for $23 a week. You can expect more Caradosso yarns via air mail with reasonable regularity now."

Accompanying "Of Deadly Weapons" came the following *Camp-Fire* notation, as currently trenchant, we thought, as the story itself—

I hope that no one reading "Of Deadly Weapons" will get the idea that either Caradosso or myself have political views on modern subjects, such as the atomic bomb or bacteriological warfare. We simply share a legitimately acquired dislike of things that go bang or cause people to lie on beds (as I did at Lille) with tubes going drip, drip, drip into their arms. We also agree that the utterances of some international politicians seem unreasonably irrelevant to the aforesaid bangs and drips; but for Caradosso's sixteenth-century Italian reaction to such things, I cannot, of course, be held in any way responsible.

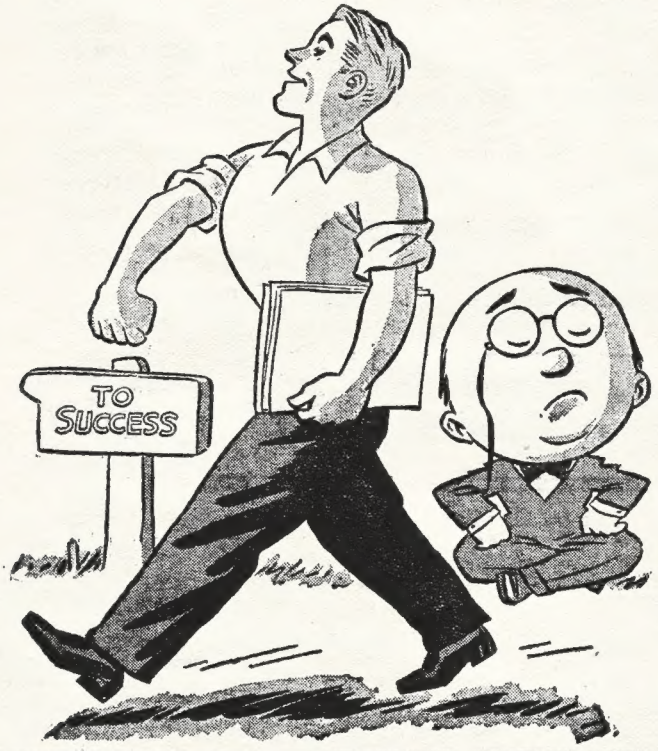
It is historically true that our present crop of "invincible" weapons (it should be "irresistible," but I've preferred to translate literally from the Latin of the earlier inventors)—is by no means the first. The alchemists produced several, of which no particulars have survived; they probably peddled them on a basis of mystery and bogus demonstrations, like modern inventors of perpetual motion. Benvenuto Cellini, however, specifies that his invention was a gunpowder of unparalleled force (his "Autobiography" gives no formula, though)—and there was another mediaeval who had a powder that would shoot seven ways! I was forced to think of him when I read recently that our own United States Army had perfected a rifle that would shoot round corners. I've used one that let me fire over a parapet while myself staying safe three feet below; but its bullet travelled in a straight line and I respectfully think bullets will continue so to do until somebody manages to repeal the laws of physics. I hasten to add that when I say "straight line" I do so with all due respect to the parabola of the trajectory.

That was just a loose phrase, such as it is unwise to use among the gun-sharps of *Camp Fire*. I wonder if they'd agree with my hypothesis, by the way, that Cellini's marvellous powder may have consisted of ordinary powder (than which there was no other at the time) very fine-grained? They loaded by volume, and with FFFG he would get more, actually, into his charger and thus think the powder more powerful. For of course Benvenuto would never tell a lie. Not much!

To get back to the irresistible weapons—there was one mooted in the Crimean War. A British admiral proposed to reduce the fortress of Sevastopol by tossing in burning sulphur—a combination of the later gas-attack and incendiary bomb; but the authorities of that time wouldn't hear of such atrocities. Whether we've grown less scrupulous since then, or more broad-minded, is a matter of individual opinion.

(Continued on page 133)

How to pass a genius



All of us can't be geniuses. But any ordinarily talented mortal can be a success—and that's more than some geniuses are.

Now, as in Æsop's time, the race doesn't always go to the one who potentially is the swiftest. The *trained* man has no trouble in passing the genius who hasn't improved his talents.

In good times and bad times, in every technical and business field, the *trained* man is worth a dozen untrained ones, no matter how gifted.

The International Correspondence Schools can't make you into a genius. For more than 50 years, however, I. C. S. has been helping its students to become *trained, successful leaders*—and it can do the same for you.

Mark your special interest on the coupon. Don't be like the unsuccessful genius who wastes his life in dreaming of what he intends to do. *Act* now!

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

ICS

BOX 3276-X, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X:

Business and Academic Courses
- ☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Arithmetic ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Certified Public Accounting
- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Federal Tax
- ☐ First Year College
- ☐ Foremanship ☐ French
- ☐ Good English ☐ High School
- ☐ Higher Mathematics
- ☐ Illustrating ☐ Motor Traffic
- ☐ Postal Service
- ☐ Salesmanship ☐ Secretarial
- ☐ Sign Lettering
- ☐ Spanish ☐ Stenography
- ☐ Traffic Management

Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Heating ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Refrigeration ☐ Steam Fitting

Chemistry Courses
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
- ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
- ☐ Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel
- ☐ Petroleum Refining ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses
- ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Civil Engineering ☐ Coal Mining
- ☐ Contracting and Building
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Lumber Dealer
- ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

Communications Courses
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Practical Telephony
- ☐ Radio, General
- ☐ Radio Operating
- ☐ Radio Servicing
- ☐ Telegraph Engineering

Electrical Courses
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electric Light and Power
- ☐ Lighting Technician
- ☐ Practical Electrician
- ☐ Power House Electric
- ☐ Ship Electrician

Internal Combustion Engines Courses
- ☐ Auto Technician ☐ Aviation
- ☐ Diesel-Electric
- ☐ Diesel Engines ☐ Gas Engines

Mechanical Courses
- ☐ Aeronautical Engineering
- ☐ Aircraft Drafting
- ☐ Flight Engineer
- ☐ Forging
- ☐ Foundry Work
- ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
- ☐ Machine Shop
- ☐ Machine Shop Inspection
- ☐ Mechanical Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mold-Loft Work
- ☐ Patternmaking—Wood, Metal
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Worker
- ☐ Ship Drafting ☐ Ship Fitting
- ☐ Tool Designing ☐ Toolmaking
- ☐ Welding—Gas and Electric

Railroad Courses
- ☐ Air Brake ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Diesel Locomotive
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Locomotive Fireman
- ☐ Railroad Section Foreman

Steam Engineering Courses
- ☐ Boilermaking
- ☐ Combustion Engineering
- ☐ Engine Running
- ☐ Marine Engineering
- ☐ Steam Electric ☐ Steam Engines

Textile Courses
- ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
- ☐ Rayon Weav'g ☐ Textile Desig'ng
- ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

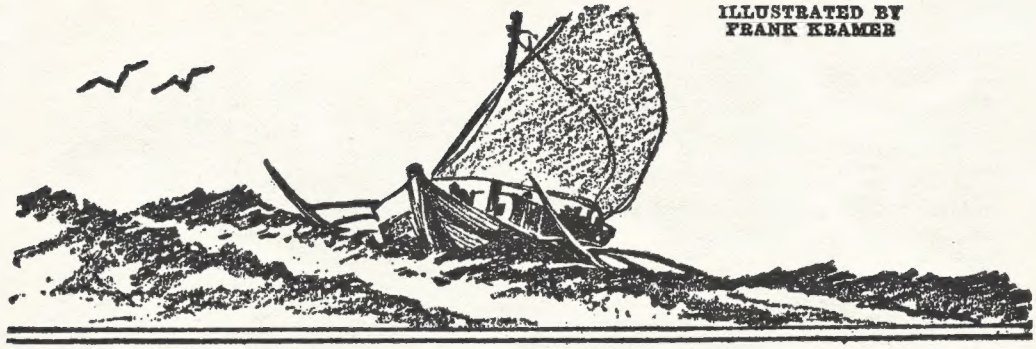
*Name*_____ *Age*____ *Home Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____ *Present Position*_____

*Working Hours*_____ *A.M. to*_____ *P.M.* **Length of Service in World War II**_____

Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces. Enrollment under the G.I. Bill of Rights approved for War II Veterans.

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.



ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

ESCAPE TO PALEMBANG

By E. HOFFMANN PRICE

THE first factory-made shoes Carson had worn in three years tormented his feet until, as he repeated his rounds of the tin diggings of Pulau Panjang, a new discomfort made him forget the blisters he had doctored the previous night. His neck ached from battling the stubborn chin which insisted on staying to the front until about nine A.M., when Carson surrendered, and looked over his shoulder. The move was quick, so that it'd be done before he could tighten up his defenses.

Behind him he saw brown men in tattered sarongs, brown men in knee-length pants; brown men in breech clouts, and in scraps of Japanese uniform: muscular little men digging the tin-laden earth. Others, bent under heavily loaded baskets balanced fore and aft on carrying-yokes,

A shout, a leap, a grab, a scramble—and they were up and over the side.

came up the stepped sides of the pit, to file toward plank-lined ditches which drained into the river.

Though the line never paused, each man did stop to dump his load of ore into the yard-wide channel. Water poured from bamboo pipe lines supported on trestles of bamboo lashed together with rattan; the flow washed the earth away, while the heavier tin-stone granules sank to accumulate against slats fastened athwart the sluice box floor. This was the oldest, the slowest, and the least efficient way of mining tin, yet it worked, which was more than one could say of the dredges which the Japs had sunk after stripping them for scrap iron, late in 1942.

Carson saw this, and only this; but with each minute, he was more certain than ever that there was always behind him something which he had not seen, and was not intended to see.

Carson hurried more than he should have when, to escape his uneasiness, he turned his back on the diggings to climb the knoll on whose crest was his bungalow, very much like a native house, except larger. Chickens squawked in the compound behind the house. Children laughed and shouted. Women gossiped. Behind all these shrill sounds were the voices of men who chewed and spat and talked serenely in circles. For no reason which Carson could grasp, there was a short break in the blend of sound when he set foot on the veranda steps. Then the voices rose, almost resolutely.

When he stepped into the dimness of the living room, a barefooted man in white bowed courteously, and without servility. "You are back early, sir?" The Number One held his hands apart, ready to strike them sharply together to call a servant to wait on the master: the Malay way, for a Chinese "boy" would have had a long drink waiting.

Carson shook his head. There was an edge to his voice when he said, "Nothing, Haroun. I'm going right out."

The Number One bowed and went back into the silence and shadow from which he had come. Carson stepped into a room whose only furnishing was a floor mat. Bed and other fixtures would come on the next trip. He reached into the bundle of personal gear he'd brought from Singapore the day previous, and got a shaving mirror somewhat smaller than a postal card. This he slipped into his shirt pocket. After a glance over his shoulder, he hurried out, and down the slope.

ON the way, Carson paused to look down at the nipa-thatched roofs of bamboo shacks perched on stilts along the river bank. He looked at the long *prahu* moored to the pier, the narrow hulled boat which had taken blocks of tin to Singapore, and come back laden with cloth and kerosene and canned goods. Already, the miners' wives blossomed out with new skirts and new jackets. A line of them squatted along the bank, laundering the old clothes which they'd have to keep for a while. They chattered, they laughed, they bobbed their sleek heads as they twisted soaked garments, smacked them against flat rocks, dipped them in the stream, and whacked again.

"Strictly normal on the wash line," Carson assured himself, and looked again at the *prahu* whose masthead traced patterns against a sun-blinded sky. Ahmat, the skipper, lounged on deck under a scrap of awning. He was busy chewing and spitting. Carson, turning his back on the river, had no urge to look over his shoulder. He realized that his feet hurt, which made him feel better for a moment. But presently, as he walked from the sluice boxes to skirt the pits, he knew again that many people were watching him as they worked.

No reason why they shouldn't look, now that he wore new hat, new shirt, and duck pants, instead of the turban and ragged sarong in which he had beaten his way out of Java, a jump ahead of Soekarno's Nationalists, to find refuge in Pulau Panjang, off the Sumatra coast. Refuge he'd found, and also, a deposit of tin rich enough to work by hand until mechanized equipment could come from the States; but something had happened to change the flavor of Pulau Panjang during his three hundred mile run to Singapore.

At the further edge of the recently cleared ground were clay furnaces which would spew flame and sparks by night. Because of the smelters' heat, the Chinese crew did not work by day. Meanwhile, men went about, collecting the tin which had run from furnace to molds during the

night. Far upstream, Carson saw the gang which was building another line of bamboo trestles to support additional pipe lines: the more water, the more sluices, and the sooner Ahmat's outriggered *prahu* would stand to sea again.

The voices behind him changed. They became guarded. This was the first time Carson had been positive about the tone. He put a soggy cigarette into his mouth, and made a show of cupping shaky hands to shelter the match flame. This gave him a chance to palm the shaving mirror, and look behind him without seeming to do so.

"Foxy bastards!" he growled, when he saw nothing which he had not already seen by looking directly. "I'll catch 'em!"

On his way back to the bungalow, he wasn't sure whether the ache started at his temples and spread to the back of his head, or began in back, and worked to the front. It wasn't the sun, it wasn't malaria; and he hadn't taken too much atabrine. Once in the house, he justified his mirror by studying the whites of his eyes to see how deep the atabrine stain had become. There was a definite yellow tinge under the deep tan of forehead, and lean cheeks.

He knew that there could be no ants crawling up his back, or up and down his pants legs, yet his skin did twitch. He stepped into the four-by-four bathroom, whose shower consisted of a five-gallon oil can with a punctured bottom. Though the bath helped, it didn't make his skin stop creeping.

Carson got the binoculars he'd picked up in the ruins of Palembang. Better say, "monocular," since one barrel had been crushed by a falling girder. After making sure that no one was behind him, he went to the window opening of the front room and trained the glass on the open pit mine.

The brown faces were too far away to come up clearly. Carson frowned and said to himself, "Anyway, three in a huddle's a conspiracy . . . the little devils are eyeing the house . . . standing, pretending they're just getting ready to move. If they were taking a breather, they'd squat on their heels."

Carson put the monocular away when a smooth-faced young fellow wearing silver-rimmed glasses came up the grade, carrying a thick ledger under his arm. His ears, which reached out like the handles of a bouillon cup, each supported a pencil. After a brisk tap-tap at the door, he came in and made a jerky bow.

"Good morning, sir," he said, in English. "Pleasant trip, sir?"

"Good enough, Jamil," Carson answered, and wished that the man would quit harping on the trip; the polite inquiry had opened each meeting since the *prahu's* return, the night before. "Got the payroll made up?"

Jamil opened the water stained book on a table whose split-bamboo top was lashed to bamboo legs. "All done—any time you say, I'll pay them."

He squatted on his heels to wait for Carson to check the names.

Carson glanced down the columns, and mentally multiplied by the number of pages. Whether there was actually a man to correspond with each entry was a question best ignored. Jamil's education, which included Dutch and English as well as Malay, made him a competent second-in-command, as well as timekeeper, paymaster, and accountant; so, within reason, let him collect for a few imaginary miners . . .

"O.K., Jamil. Dish it out! And before they start buying the stuff Ahmat brought back, tell him to be sure they don't give him any Jap guilders."

"Oh, no, sir! No Jap guilders." Then, gesturing toward the diggings, "You like what I make?"

"The new pipe line? Couldn't run the place without you," Carson said.

Yet he was glad when Jamil picked up the book and left. Jamil was young enough to have learned the Jap smirk during the years of the occupation; couldn't help that, nor the suggestion of politely sucking in his breath. Carson was glad when Jamil left, and he was likewise glad when old Haji Musa came in from the *kampong*, around mid-afternoon.

THE village headman looked a lot like Ahmat, the skipper, which was reasonable enough, since they were cousins. Haji Musa wore a frowsy red skullcap, a threadbare jacket with tarnished gilt lacework, and Chinese silk pants about to fall apart. His youngest son, a solemn little fellow of ten, came after him carrying a silver inlaid betel-nut box.

The old man's face had more wrinkles than a well-dried prune; and all those wrinkles puckered into a pleasant pattern when he greeted Carson. By preference as well as necessity, Haji Musa sat on the floor.

After greetings came the business of taking betel nut, slaked lime, spices and bits of tobacco from the compartments of the box, and shaping a chew. Once the spitting was decently underway, Carson gave him the flashlight he had brought from Singapore, and also the kerosene lantern. Haji Musa's pleasure, however, had an absent-minded flavor.

"The Dutch talk, and Soekarno talks," he went on. "Too much talk, and too much trouble. Everybody making trouble for everybody."

Carson spat, and Carson pondered. The Indonesian Nationalists, for all their hell-raising in Java, and sending agitators into Sumatra, had left the outlying islands in peace. The Dutch had the bombers, and the Nationalists had 35,000 white civilian prisoners they'd taken over from the defeated Japs. This combination kept each side from decisive moves. And Carson, who could do nothing about the underfed hostages, preferred not to think of them, or of the parties of terrorists who ranged up and down Java.

"We're doing all right, Haji," Carson finally said. "Jamil is doing well. Everyone does well."

But Haji's eyes were troubled. "Praise Allah, everyone does well," he echoed.

This went on, in Malay circles, until Carson could hardly keep from making the gross error of asking just what the devil was going on behind his back. It was clear that the headman was trying to convey something precisely the opposite of his words—that he wanted to tell Carson something, yet held back. Finally, he politely asked permission to leave; and when permission was just as politely granted, Haji had the expression of one who had done his best.

Carson went to the veranda. Haji, only a few yards beyond the bottom step, had halted. He stood there, poised for motion, yet not moving. Carson's teeth began to grit, but didn't; instead, his mouth sagged. Like the headman, he couldn't decide whether to move or stand fast.

The smoke was what puzzled him, and the wrathful shouting and the screeches of panic. Then he got it: the Chinese shacks were ablaze, and the Chinese were dashing in every direction. Some raced for the jungle. Others darted in and out among the furnaces. Still others raced along the edge of the pits. Panic drove a number to climbing the trestles, and leaping into the sluice boxes.

Miners armed with knives, with choppers, with wavy-bladed *kreeses*, and with digging implements were chasing them. From Carson's knoll, the spectacle was unreal, because the figures were small, and foreshortened by his looking down. Although everything was all too plain, he nevertheless could not believe that Chinese were being cut down, while others, cornered, were darting at their tormentors, screeching and clawing. A few guns came into play, but clubs and fish spears and edged weapons did most of the work.

Carson shouted, "Haji, what—what—damn it, what's that, who started it? It's all planned out—"

The headman drew a deep breath. He smiled, sadly and with Moslem resignation. "Oh, yes. I came to tell you. But—what good to speak? You try to stop it, then what? It is bad, when you say, stop, and nobody stops."

"You didn't tell them not to?"

"No, *tuan*. Only a fool orders when no one will obey."

During the minute just past, it had become clear to Carson why he had felt many eyes behind his back that day; and he also knew that he had just heard Malay wisdom. Finally, he realized that he had seen more than an anti-Chinese riot. Carson's face must have betrayed a greater understanding than he was conscious of having, for Haji's eyes became troubled, and the old man said, "Let me go where you go. I have made the pilgrimage to Holy Mecca, so they will respect me, maybe."

CHAPTER II

LITTLE TIN GODS

NOW that the villagers had come into the open, Carson felt better. Though he did not know what would happen, he was certain at least that it would be in front rather than behind him. An orderly group

walked up the hill to meet him and Haji Musa. The leader was Jamil, who said to Carson, "Now it is Indonesia for the Indonesians. Foreigners must cease and desist from exploiting us. This is now part of Soekarno's Republic."

The smooth-faced little man spoke with dignity beyond his years; the Japanese smirk was gone. Haji Musa stepped forward, saying, "O thou son of a lewd mother, what is this thing?"

Jamil was patient with age and wrath. He pointed toward the gray masonry ruin some distance downstream from the village; though Dutch archives might have given its history, none of today's people knew other than that, centuries ago, white foreigners had built solidly, and had gone away. Jamil indicated the stone fort.

The red and white flag of the Indonesian Republic fluttered from a bamboo mast. Carson spat and said, "Made it of calico I brought from Singapore!"

"Oh, yes, sir. Not proper making it of old rags."

Haji Musa looked and he saw. Then he took off his skullcap and flung it to the ground, and said, "God does what he will do!"

The gesture had no western equivalent, though Carson understood that it was something comparable to a general's taking off his stars to trample them before troops too cowardly to be led; or like Lady Godiva riding naked through the streets of London. But here, no one was ashamed, or even abashed at seeing a pious pilgrim with bared head. Jamil said, "This is the new way, Haji. First the Chinese, then other outlanders." He turned to Carson. "The tin is in our earth. It comes out by our sweat. The new suit you wear comes from our sweat. No more do we work for you to take."

The *prahu* still tugged at her moorings, and Ahmat still sat beneath his awning, chewing and spitting. Things of the land did not concern him, just as things in far-off Java had not concerned Carson, once he turned his back on them to save himself.

"Give me a *sampan,* and I'll go," Carson proposed. "I came here hungry and empty-handed, I leave the same way, and the peace upon Soekarno and his Republic."

He took off his shirt and ripped it lengthwise. He offered Haji Musa the pieces to bind about his uncovered head. The old man took the cloth, and beckoned to his young son, who had been standing by, wide-eyed, still holding the betel-nut box. The silence which followed was torn by the screech of a Chinese whose hiding place had been uncovered. The sound ended in one breath. The men behind Jamil swayed against him and made him totter, but he raised his hand. They settled back, and studied their stained weapons.

Finally Jamil spoke: "You stay here, Mr. Carson. The English in Singapore will trade with you, maybe not with us. They will deal better with you because you are white."

"So I'm to run the works for your profit?"

"We ran it for yours, sir. Sauce for the goose, not so?"

Carson, able to see further than the end of his nose, figured that the next run to Singapore would be a one-way trip. But Jamil also had vision. He said, "I go with you to Singapore. Your friend, the former *penghulu,* Haji Musa, he goes bond for your good behavior."

So they politely marched the former headman to the Dutch ruins, which were now prison and government house, leaving Carson to get himself another shirt.

"Before these guys are through," he told himself, "they'll wish they had Chinese to do the hot and sweaty work."

But there wasn't any work that night. Instead, there were cockfights in the bamboo arena. Meanwhile, a pipe line trestle, weakened by a panic-stricken Chinese attempt to climb it, collapsed. The water flooded a nearby pit, and washed it full of topsoil.

Jamil was too busy to care. "In the morning, in the morning," he answered, amiably. "We are free people now; with half the work, we get twice the profit."

"Nice if you can arrange it," Carson agreed, and resisted the temptation to ask Jamil if the idea was purely Malay shiftlessness, or whether he'd been borrowing notions from the P.K.I., the Indonesian Communist group which found the disorders in Java precisely suited to its purposes.

He made for the river bank. Ahmat was neither aboard the *prahu,* nor in his house.

Carson boarded the vessel and divided his time between waiting and fighting mosquitoes.

FIREFLIES made blue-white blobs against the causarina trees. Bats cheeped and twittered; their claws tangled in Carson's collar, and their smooth wings brushed his cheeks. Downstream, a crocodile grumbled. Later, the water threshed savagely. Someone or something wouldn't turn up at dawn . . .

Finally Ahmat came aboard. After considerable chewing, Carson came to the point by saying, "With your cousin locked up, you and I are as good as in jail."

"That is true, by Allah! His life is on my head."

"And on mine."

"The power is with Allah."

"They'll be taking your *prahu* next."

"They have taken it. All those dog-brothers who have nothing, they take from those who do have. And the peace upon us all."

"You can take Haji Musa some tobacco," Carson said. "I'd better not try to see him. Not until you've found out enough for us to break in and let him out."

"To go to Singapore?"

"Maybe there, maybe to Palembang. When the Dutch make a deal with Soekarno, and things straighten out, you and Haji Musa can come back. Everyone'll be glad to see you. Jamil got rough with the Chinese, just to get everyone behind him. But he'll end by getting rough with his own people."

Ahmat rolled another chew. "What you say may be true, the things he does are not *adat,* not custom. But wisdom and power come from Allah and haste comes from Satan."

All of which meant that Haji would stay locked up until Amat found an unhasty way of doing things. So Carson went up the hill to his bungalow.

He reached up into the thatch to get the pistol he had brought with him from Java. This was the one possession he had kept concealed—reasoning that an unarmed man gets better hospitality.

Ahmat's dallying, contrary to Carson's expectations, resulted in quick action. Two nights later, when the furnaces were once more spewing flames and sparks while sweating Malays fed them fuel and baskets of ore, the old skipper intercepted Carson halfway between bungalow and diggings.

"Does the Number One boy expect you?"

Carson answered, "He walked out. The cook walked out. Everyone walked out. They don't have to work, they're getting their divvy from the tin. This is a democracy, you sit on your pratt, and Allah delivers the daily rice. What's up?"

"The tide is right pretty soon. We shove off with Haji."

"How about crew and grub?"

"Haji is a good sailor. Then, my boys, Nuh, and his brother, Idris. The *serang,* Walid, he says these people are pig lovers, he wants no more of it. And, you, you understand sailing. Allah will feed us, and we have two guns nobody knows about."

Carson pondered. "Your wife knows about this notion?"

"When it is time to make sail, I grab her and say, woman, we are going. And she goes. No time to gabble with the neighbors."

"You know the way to Palembang?"

"Like the palm of my hand."

"They couldn't get us there, not even the whole Nationalist Army."

Carson followed Ahmat to the *prahu.* Without any sound, they shoved off in a narrow dugout, hugging the shadows of the bank. Presently, the dugout nosed into the moat which girdled the ruin.

Water hyacinths blocked the long neglected channel. Setting aside their paddles, Carson and Ahmat took bamboo poles and wormed the dugout along. Roots and leaves rather than water supported it, so that Carson could not decide whether he was aground or afloat. As they came toward the crumbling drawbridge, the smell of wood smoke and the acrid smoke of smoldering grass reached into the swamp vapors. No light came from the entrance except the glow of the mosquito smudge.

The guards were asleep, and the new government was asleep, but there was no telling how soundly. The footbridge improvised to span the gap left by the crumbling of the original structure had been drawn in. Ahmat, after a moment of sizing things up, nudged Carson. Thus

Carson and Ahmat took bamboo poles and wormed the dugout along.

far, everything was according to plan. They reversed their course through the hyacinths until Ahmat signaled, and pointed to a gun embrasure.

THE brass cannon had long since been taken away, so that the opening was clear. When they had poled alongside and directly under the embrasure, Ahmat re-

peated the details: "You go in. You go out of the gun house, to the right. A door is beside it. In the room with the door, there is my cousin. Take this chisel, it is enough."

Now that he was on the scene, the plan no longer seemed so good. Carson objected, "You go in, I'll wait to hold the boat steady."

But Ahmat had an answer: "They catch me, then who sails the *prahu*? They catch you, nobody thinks of me, soon I come back, doing it better, let you out with my cousin."

There was sense to this. Carson agreed. Ahmat took a pole to which was rigged a piece of bamboo a yard long. After thrusting the pole through the embrasure, he pulled the jerk line, bringing the short piece of bamboo crosswise of the opening. Another tug, and the line was free, reaching down to the dugout.

Carson "walked" himself up the slippery masonry. He could not get a foothold on the sill, for it was beveled to allow for depressing the cannon muzzle. However, he did contrive to grab the inner edge. That done, he wormed through, until his hands touched the rubbish of the casemate floor. He shivered from hearing things crawl in the dark. Wings brushed his face.

After moments of listening to a night bird's protest, and the chatter of a monkey in the jungle beyond the moat, Carson risked using his flashlight. The vaulted passage followed the hexagonal plan of the fort. Far ahead, he caught the reflection of the guards' mosquito smudge. The vault magnified the sound of coughing and stirring about, but there was no speech.

A few yards to the right, he came to a door with narrowly spaced bars. A length of chain secured it. The link at one end, heated and cut with a chisel, had been engaged with the link at the other end; and a few hammer blows had closed the cut. But as Ahmat had said, the cut could be wedged open, easily, with a chisel.

In the cell, Haji Musa had burrowed into rubbish, making a bunk. Carson had slept in worse places: yet the sight angered him. He played the light on Haji's head. The old man stirred, sat up, and muttered, "I betake me to Allah for refuge from Satan—"

He expected new evils, and he was resigned.

Carson whispered, "Shhhh—not a word, Haji."

The one-time headman blinked into the glare, then came to the bars. "What is this?" he asked when he recognized Carson. "How do you come from your prison?"

"I'm not locked up. We're here to turn you loose." He touched the chain and explained the plan.

Haji heard him out. Then, "I will not leave my people. They are fools now, but how long can they stay fools?"

Carson controlled his impatience, though with difficulty. "It's easy to stretch that cut link. We'll have you out in no time."

"Better here than among strangers."

"You won't be among strangers. All Malays came from Palembang."

"Verily, they did, but that was a thousand, two thousand years ago, yea, five times that long ago, though Allah is the Knower."

"You'll die in this pest hole!"

"Or, I live to come out of it, and do men live forever in Palembang? Because my people are fools, should I leave them? Go, now, you and Ahmat, and the peace upon you."

"Look. These are not my people."

"Then speak to your own people in Singapore."

"Your head is my bond."

"Such a bond is not fitting, it is not *adat*. Go wherever seems good to you, and what happens to me, it happens. It is on me, not on you."

The old man's stubbornness first made Carson break into a tremor of helpless wrath. He whispered, fiercely, "Damn it, I will go!"

"Salamat Jalan," Haji said, benignantly. "Peaceful journeying. And with my blessing."

Carson, knowing that he was beaten, went back to Ahmat.

THE next day, Jamil came to Carson and said, "Do not try again to free Haji Musa. You will be caught."

"If you're so sure I tried to help him get out why haven't you done something?"

Jamil smiled wisely. "Not necessary do-

ing something, nobody knows except I. Many saw the trail of a small boat in the water plants, but not many can reason."

"That's why you're running the town!"

"Yes," Jamil answered, with sincere humility. "Exactly, sir. Do not be quarrelsome in mind. Once the Republic is recognized, once trade is restored, once the simple people learn things, you will leave. Because then we don't want you here."

"Maybe you are right . . ."

Jamil extended his small, well-shaped hand. "Thank you, Mr. Carson. I wish that those Dutchmen in Malino making conversations were sincere like you."

Carson said, aloud, as he watched Jamil walk away, "The poor little bastard believes he's right, what can you do with a guy like that?"

What choked Carson was the fate of the Chinese. Quite a few survived in the jungle, he gathered; just how, no one bothered to explain, yet it was plausible. But even the durability of a Chinese has its limits.

Finally, the days added up despite "cooperative" inefficiency—and a long line of men, extending from the furnaces to the river bank, passed bars of tin from hand to hand, while Ahmat's crew stowed the metal. Carson, whether or not he liked it, was going to Singapore, with Jamil as supercargo.

There was pepper also, gathered in the hills, and cutch from the mangrove swamps of a nearby island. The news of Ahmat's trade with Singapore had spread.

"You see," Jamil told Carson, when the *prahu* was ready to cast off, "our neighbors believe in the Republic."

"They're very grateful to you for bringing the good word from Java."

Jamil nodded and smiled; he caught the meaning behind Carson's words. "I, and many others, of course we've gone to Sumatra and Borneo and elsewhere, to educate people. But my work would have succeeded as well, perhaps better, if you'd not found me so useful as an assistant. You can't block progress."

"O.K., Jamil, you played me for a sap, because I let you. No hard feelings. I didn't put the tin into the ground, so I'm a thief."

"Oh, no, Mr. Carson. Merely unprogressive, not having learned that human rights are higher than property rights."

"That's what Haji Musa thinks, sitting in the jug." Then, seeing that the jab had missed fire, Carson added, "You forget that every human right hinges on property of some kind. But you hold the aces, and I hold a sense of humor."

The current caught the *prahu*. Heeding the tiller, she swung to midstream. As she cleared the ruined fort, the ebb increased her headway. *"Selamat jalan!"* those ashore cried, and those aboard answered, "Peaceful tarrying!"

Ahmat sat under his awning, spitting and chewing. He wouldn't get his feet on the poop till she reached the river's mouth; thereafter, he'd be busy enough.

Presently, Carson heard the rumble of the surf, and saw the white line that slanted across the inlet. Ahmat, however, saw more. "O God! By God! By the One True God!" he exclaimed, grabbing for the remains of the Zeiss binoculars Carson had given him. "Allah curse their re-

ligion! Allah curse whoever does not curse the religion of those pig-fathers!"

"Now what's wrong?" Carson squinted. "Looks like someone crossing the bar."

"Verily, Allah hates us! Look, look at what comes!"

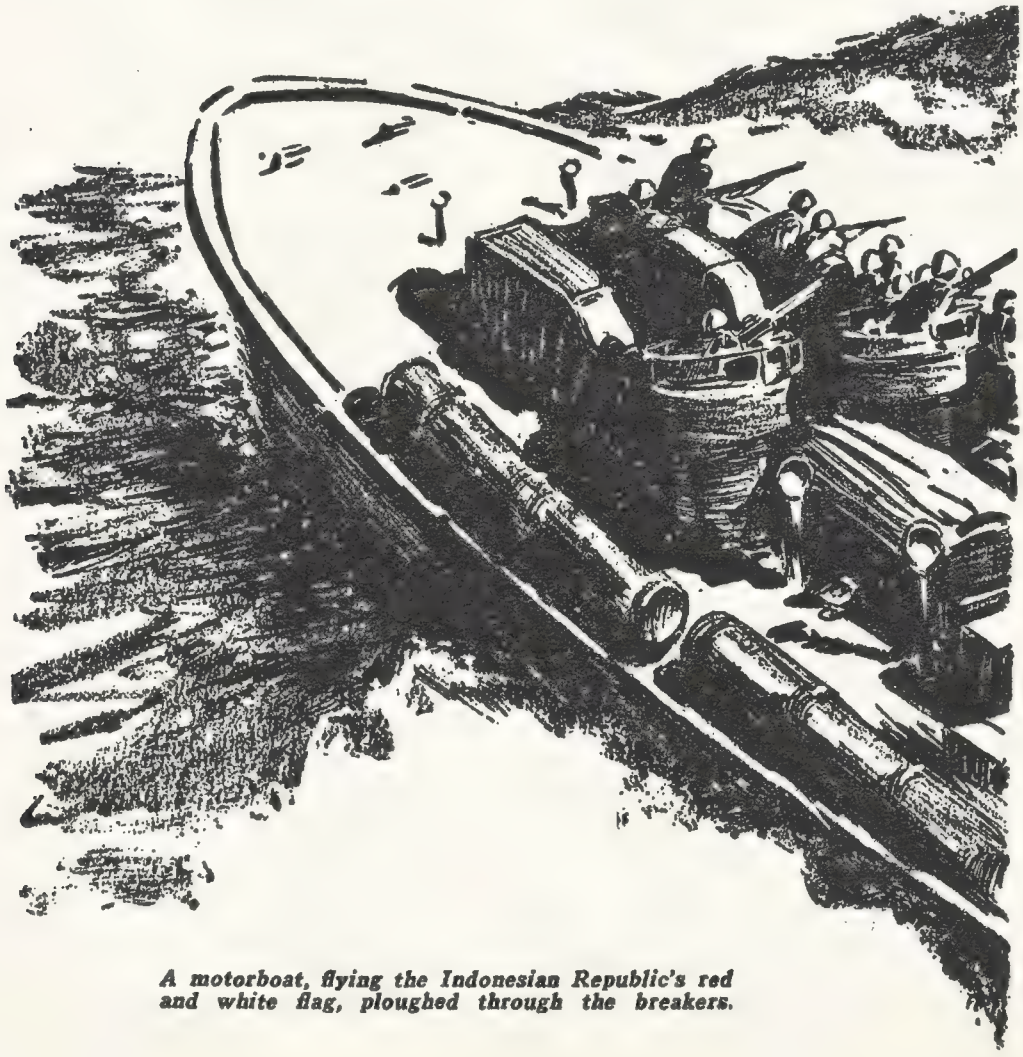
Carson took the glasses. A motorboat, flying the Indonesian Republic's red and white flag, ploughed through the breakers. She carried at least a dozen men, all wearing helmets and Japanese uniforms; she mounted a pair of machine guns starboard, and a pair on the port side.

"A PT boat," Carson said, a moment later. "Lord, but she's crummy, and her engines sound sick."

Ahmat called to the *serang*, and told him to break out the Indonesian colors. Jamil beamed. "You see? You see? The navy of the Republic."

Without knowing why, Carson had a queer feeling that something was about to happen, and probably not anything good; neither could he explain why he said, almost triumphantly, "Don't cackle, Jamil, you've been away from headquarters quite a while."

But Jamil went forward to hail the approaching boat. She was ploughing upstream, bucking tide and current. "Poor old gal's taken a frightful beating," Carson said, as the voice of the laboring



A motorboat, flying the Indonesian Republic's red and white flag, ploughed through the breakers.

engines became stronger. "Damn shame, too . . ."

Jamil yelled, "See, another boat! The Republic comes to make an outpost!"

Ahmat cursed and grabbed the glasses. One look, and he set them down. "Allah does what he will do! Verily, the spoiler and the looter has come, and there is no help for this thing."

THE leading boat justified Ahmat's foreboding when a forward machine gun chattered. Green tracers and red ones twisted and swooped across the *prahu's* bow. Jamil cried, "He means, heave to for inspecting!"

"O thou cut-off one, we know what he means!" Ahmat shouted.

Another burst. The *prahu's* crew manned the sweeps, and worked her toward the bank. By now, the second motorboat had crossed the bar, and was laboring upstream; the first wallowed up alongside the *prahu*. Covered by the leveled rifles of his men, the skipper of the motorboat boarded Ahmat's vessel.

"O *nakhoda,*" Ahmat asked, "what is this? We be peaceful traders putting out, and the sea, it belongs to Allah."

The boarder folded his arms. He was young, self-assured, and hard-eyed; somewhat taller than the men of Pulau Panjang, and neither as brown nor as beetle browed. His nose was thinner, higher, and without the nostril flare which made Ahmat's expression at times resemble that of an ancient stallion thinking of the days when he had spent all his time looking for trouble.

"I am Captain Kolopakeng," he announced, after eyeing skipper and *serang*. "As you say, the sea belongs to Allah and likewise the land. But after Him, to the Republic. Where are your ship's papers? Your export license? Receipts for export duty?"

For Ahmat to state that there wasn't any government to issue any such documents would have been tactless. "Ask Jamil," he said to Captain Kolopakeng. "He's the government."

The captain from Java turned on Jamil, and said, "So, *you* are the government?"

"I came here, finding none, and I organized one, as ordered."

"That is clear." Kolopakeng glanced at the flag waving from the ruined fortress. "Even a Government House?"

"One was needed."

"But no need of sending a report saying that Pulau Panjang had a tin mine—" He kicked one of the bags on deck. "Nor that a pepper crop had been harvested."

Jamil licked his lips. "Getting word to Java takes time."

"So does smelting a ship load of tin." Kolopakeng beckoned to his guards. "Take charge of this fellow, take charge of the Government House. I'll be over, presently." He turned again to Ahmat. "We've suspected something of the sort. Carry on, and make sail. The other boat will convoy you."

"Where to?"

"To Java. When trading is to be done, the Government will do it. In its own good time, and not with our enemies. This Englishman—or is he a Dutchman?—no matter which! He's going to Java. Don't tell me later he went over the side and swam to Dutch-held territory. Or you'll get what he should have got."

"What'll that be?" Carson demanded.

Kolopakeng smiled maliciously. "If you think the skipper should find out, try to escape." Then, "Ahmat, take orders from the master of the boat that followed me."

With machine guns ready to sweep the *prahu's* deck and riddle her thin hull, there was no choice. Ahmat could only obey.

When Kolopakeng went back to his PT boat, Carson began to laugh. "O man," Ahmat demanded, "if this thing is funny, tell me why, all the more so because nothing ahead of us is amusing!"

Carson explained, "Everyone ashore was happy to play the devil with foreigners, because it showed easy profit, and patriotism, too. But now that the noble Indonesian Republic has grabbed all the tin they've been sweated to produce—well, I was thinking of what they'll be telling each other when they find out there's no calico, no canned goods, no kerosene, not a damn thing coming back!"

"I didn't like the idea," Ahmat retorted, sourly, "and look what happens to my *prahu!* You won't enjoy going back to be locked up."

"You still have a deck under your feet, and I'm not in Java, not yet."

Ahmat made as if to answer; but instead, he shouted to the *serang*. Now that the *prahu* had cleared the headland, the seamen made sail. Then, as the drive of the monsoon made her port outrigger dig deep into the water, both skipper and crew forgot their troubles. Four men scrambled along the struts of the starboard outrigger. As she gained headway, the wry fellows were half hidden by spray. Like monkeys, they perched on the bamboo spars, moving inboard, or out, correcting her trim with each change of the wind.

Sail bellying, mast vibrating, shrouds and lines humming, the *prahu* skimmed over the bar, and out into the Sunda Sea.

The sun was dipping toward the mangrove swamps of the Sumatra coast. The PT boat followed in the *prahu's* wake, ready at the first sign of trickery to swoop up alongside and set to work with machine guns.

It was the PT's engines which set Carson thinking. They were badly run down. Judging from the fumes exhaled by the gas tank when she'd come alongside, up the river, the fuel was closer to fifty octane than to the hundred octane required for good performance. Normally, a PT could make sixty knots, while the fastest *prahu* that ever skimmed the sea could just about touch twenty. Nothing, however, was normal; so Carson said to Ahmat, "She may be able to run rings around us, and again, maybe we can walk away from her. But how find out, and not get shot out of the water, just in case they decide to teach us a lesson?"

Ahmat's nostrils flared, and there was cunning in his deep-set eyes when he answered, "O friend, I have been thinking on this thing, and God does what he will do!" He pointed west, at the low and forbidding Sumatra coast, rimmed with mangrove swamps. "Prison in Java is better than the beach ahead, and whatever is to be done, it must be done long before we are off Palembang."

"Go ahead and do it," Carson told him. "I'm fed up with barbed wire and social experiments."

CHAPTER III

PRAHU VS. PT

CARSON watched Ahmat study the sinking sun. Finally he spoke to the *serang*, who broke out odds and ends of canvas. These the men bent to lines, and to bamboo spars.

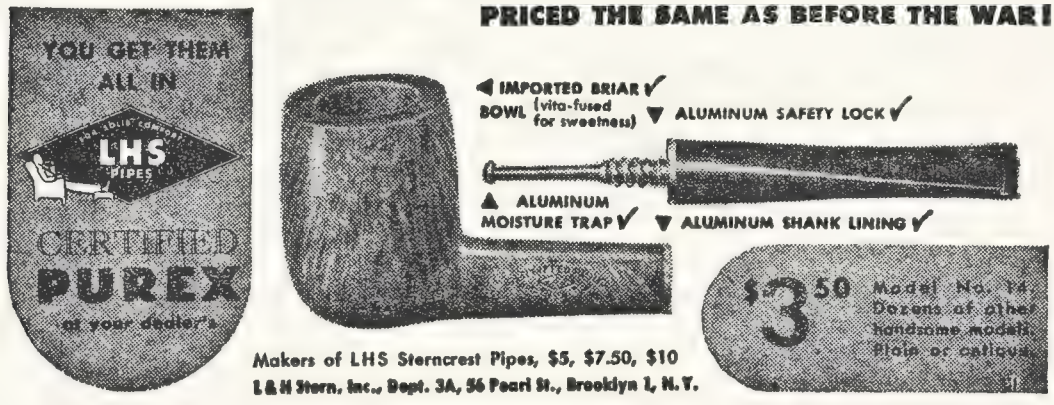
"My grandfather," Ahmat later said, "was a pirate. In his day, there was nothing as fast as that accursed putt-putt boat, though the three-masted ships of the infidels, those with the enormous sails, square-rigged, they were not slow."

"Clipper ships?"

"Ay walleh! Even those, once in a while they were becalmed, easy to loot and burn to the water line." Ahmat sighed. "These be evil days, when one man sails on the winds of Allah, and another man has a stinking thing that mocks the wind."

"You're making me cry."

Ahmat cocked his head to squint across the water; it was as though reflection and color had gained meaning. He consulted with the *serang*. The two muttered, nodded. The *serang* went amidships to have the men jettison blocks of tin.


PRICED THE SAME AS BEFORE THE WAR!
YOU GET THEM ALL IN
LHS PIPES
CERTIFIED PUREX
at your dealer's
IMPORTED BRIAR BOWL (vita-fused for sweetness)
ALUMINUM SAFETY LOCK
ALUMINUM MOISTURE TRAP
ALUMINUM SHANK LINING
$3.50 Model No. 14. Dozens of other handsome models. Plain or cutlove.
Makers of LHS Sterncrest Pipes, $5, $7.50, $10
L & H Stern, Inc., Dept. 3A, 56 Pearl St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.

"It brings us nothing, let the sea have it," Ahmat observed. "Some, but not all."

Others set to work shifting cargo. Though Carson could scarcely say that the trim had been materially altered, the *prahu* did gain speed. The men riding the outriggers shifted. The angle between wake and course became narrower; leeway had been reduced.

"That engine isn't as loud any more," Carson remarked.

Ahmat grinned. "It'll be louder, when they notice."

He was right. Despite the glare of the setting sun, the PT skipper had finally awakened. Carson listened, then said, "She sounds bad, but she still has a lot to give."

Ahmat resumed studying sun and water. The crew set more sail: the odds and ends, the scraps, and so placed that Carson at last said, "Your grandfather must have got more than loot from the China clippers. He seems to have learned about stuns'ls, save-alls, and all the other tricks."

Deck and hull now vibrated. The pounding and hammering made Carson's head ache. The *prahu* had become a living creature, nor was this at all strange, since the men who rode the outriggers were as much a part of her as were mast and rigging.

The PT again closed the gap. Carson sniffed the wind. Ahmat said, "She stinks."

Carson nodded. "That gas, and that oil. And she's getting hot."

"I don't understand putt-putt boats."

"Well, it is this way. You can't outrun her, but if you keep her crowded long enough, she may blow up. Those fellows don't understand putt-putt boats any too well either, and even if they did, they haven't any way of keeping her in shape. She's probably worse than she sounds."

More tin went over the side. Ahmat shifted the remaining cargo. Carson got the impression that the *prahu's* bow had risen perceptibly, though he couldn't judge from the outriggers: flying spray hid them.

The stench of hot lube kicked out through the breather stacks became stronger. "That old gal's bearings are so loose you could throw a cat through 'em," Carson said to the wind, since his observation could scarcely be explained to Ahmat. "Hope none of those mugs are looking at the oil gauge."

But within a quarter of an hour, Carson learned that the PT's crew was not entirely innocent. The port machine gun unraveled a burst. Several tracers needled the sail. The man at the tiller made a derisive gesture. Ahmat grinned and said, "They can't see, they shoot into the sun."

A second burst grazed the water. The whine and whistle of slugs made everyone duck.

"He mean, slow down," Ahmat yelled. "He don't want to hurt anybody."

While there might have been some truth in the reassurance Carson felt conspicuous on deck. It was not Ahmat's grin and swagger which kept Carson in the open; it was the helmsman who, though a poor target because of rudder post and tiller, was nevertheless exposed and nearest of all to the enemy.

But the narrow hull of the *prahu* was no easier than a dancing sliver for sun-dazzled gunners to hit, so the PT quit wasting ammunition. Instead, she revved up and swung out a little.

"Going to nail us broadside, instead of nailing us fore and aft," Carson said. "We're dead ducks, unless we heave to, or she blows up."

The engine now sounded like a concrete mixer full of anvils, but she forged ahead. She swooped, she knifed the waves.

Ahmat said, "In the name of Allah!" and they took in sail.

"In the name of Allah, and double it," Carson groaned.

Then he saw that Ahmat wasn't worried; that he was again squinting along the water's face, sizing up the reflections, though he might have been studying the unappetizing Sumatra coast.

DRIVEN now only by standard sail, the *prahu* lost headway. The PT's throttle eased off. Judging from the sound, she'd taken a deadly beating during that wide-open run. Ahmat's grin suggested that he was baiting her, and that he'd presently pick up speed again, until he finally broke the engine's feeble heart.

When the *prahu* sharply changed her course, now skirting the coast instead of hauling for it, Carson wondered why Ahmat was, for the moment, heading across the PT's bow. She bored straight on, to come alongside; their courses would

very quickly cross. It must look, from the pursuing skipper's viewpoint, that Ahmat had decided to heave to for orders.

And Ahmat now studied the PT. She was on the port bow—then hard abeam—then—

At Ahmat's yell, the *prahu* sheered off, making for the coast again. The PT slipped to the port quarter—then dead astern. Her engine wound up all the way.

"Good and damn sore now! But what—"

The query got the answer, though not from Ahmat. The PT seemed anchored. Smoke billowed from her cockpit. The engines raced. Her prop churned the water. Carson knew what had happened, even before Ahmat wagged his head and said, "That pig lover, he is on a mud bank."

Carson sang out, "Yo-ho for Palembang!" He was thinking of white man's chow, and the chance of a job with the engineers who had just set to work rebuilding the destroyed oil refineries; the haven which had not existed at the time of his escape from Java.

Ahmat, however, was thoughtful. "Too many more nationalists off Bangka. Pretty soon the PT gets off the mud, maybe. That fellow is very mad, he is insulted, he has to catch us. If not, then he loses face with the other skipper for letting us get away."

"We can gamble on making Palembang," Carson persisted.

"Allah gives each man luck, one man getting more, one man getting less. Beating PT, it is good, and praise Allah. Beating another one, that is asking too much, too soon."

They skirted the coast. Ahmat, acting as though there had to be a disaster or at least the risk of it, to compensate for having tricked a power boat, studied the mangrove swamps, and the occasional fishing villages, perched high on stilts, which broke the monotony. On the port quarter, Carson noted the greenish smudge of islands rising from the sea. Beyond these small ones lay Bangka Island, and, dead ahead, the Bangka Strait, as likely patrolled by enemy as by friend.

"Soon be dark," Carson remarked hopefully.

But Ahmat ignored him. Then the lookout sang out, and the skipper grabbed the glasses. "Now where is the luck for this meeting!" he demanded of sea and sky. "Look, O man! A putt-putt and she hauls for us."

"That so-and-so back there may have a radio."

That, or else the day's ration of evil, to compensate for previous luck, accounted for the boat which flew the red and white flag. There was no sea room, no chance to maneuver, so Ahmat let her run with the wind. She barely cleared a sandbar. Then, after taking in the sail, they manned the sweeps, to pull for the inlet which the skipper had been considering before the encounter.

The approaching motorboat swerved sharply enough to stay off the barely submerged sandspit. But as the Malay seamen plied the sweeps, they could tell from the sound of the newcomer's engines that she was putting about.

"Found a deep spot, and got through, or they're looking for one."

Ahmat agreed. Even though they'd cleared the leeward side of the barrier, the enemy still had a good chance of running aground, yet the *prahu* had wasted no time. She nosed through a gap in the tangled mangroves, and into a deep and steaming twilight.

Overhead, little more than a thread of ruddy sky was visible. Something had swallowed the breeze. The air was dead, and dripping. Mosquitoes buzzed like the drone of a far-off bombing squadron. Tiny, vicious gnats monopolized what space the mosquitoes left in the air. In the further gloom, crocodiles bellowed.

Outside, the pursuing motorboat revved up. For a moment, Carson thought she was aground; then she throttled down to a steady beat. Ahmat said, "They're inside, and the inlet's deep enough. Nothing to do now but leave the *prahu* and go ashore."

THE Malays got rice and water and cooking pots. They broke out two Japanese military rifles, a muzzle loader, a Nambu 7 mm. pistol, and three *kreeses*. Then came the struggle through knee-deep mud to the bank and its barrier of mangrove roots, which reached several feet above high water level.

As Carson wormed among the air-roots, and the downward striking sprouts of the mangroves, the roar of engines shook the

Carson felt the stinging fragments of bullet jackets shattered in flight.

steaming vault. Machine gun slugs riddled the abandoned *prahu*. Tracers set fire to rigging and oily deck planks. And then, hearing the fugitives crawling through the mangrove tangle, the Nationalists raked the shore with fire.

They shouldn't have done more than annoy the monkeys and parrots, since tough stalks and roots deflected most of the volley. Blind luck, however, did better than had aimed fire across open sea. A man yelled. Ahmat lurched to his knees, clutched his side, and slowly got up.

"Nothing," he muttered, and led on.

Carson felt the stinging fragments of bullet jackets shattered in flight. He had already been so thoroughly torn and scratched by thorny creepers that flying

metal didn't count. What worried him was the way Ahmat stumbled, once they fought their way from the river's barricade, and into swamp less densely overgrown.

Despite gathering gloom, he could see the dark stain which spread over Ahmat's jacket. The skipper let Carson help him to his feet, and up the slope of a spongy hummock covered with rank grass. Once on the crest, he staggered and went limp. "They won't come ashore after us," he mumbled. "Not tonight, *insha'allah* . . . they're afraid to."

Ahmat had been drilled neatly. Despite the short range, the bullet had struck nose first, instead of keyholing. And the wound was high. Carson, tearing strips from his shirt, did his best. The first aid courses hadn't explained how to work in a swamp and how to carry on when there would not be an ambulance on the way. So, when one of the sailors offered a cud of betel nut and tobacco as an antiseptic dressing, Carson saw no good cause for sneering.

He also accepted a string on which hung a tiny, blue enameled hand, the "Hand of Fatma," whose fingers symbolized the five holy persons of Islam. He said, "In the name of Allah," and tied the lucky charm to the bandage.

Then the seaman who had yelled, the one hit an instant before Ahmat went to his knees, thrust out his leg. The wound wasn't worth bandaging, since the bleeding had already stopped. Carson was about to explain that among the entire crew he couldn't find a piece of clean cloth even as large as a postage stamp, when he noted the expression on the brown faces, and the eyes which shifted with his every move. Now that Ahmat was blue-lipped from shock, and shivering, they looked to Carson for attention.

He tore off some more of his shirt, and set to work.

When this was done, Carson said, "They're not coming after us because we'd hear them and shoot them to ribbons. But they're waiting; otherwise they'd put out to sea by now."

"*Wallah,* that is right," several agreed.

He went on, "They'll be going upstream to tell the people at each settlement to be on the watch for outlaws who'll raid gardens and chicken roosts."

This required no elaboration, since between coastal swamps and the far-off mountains of Sumatra, the population concentrated along the rivers. Carson's choice, therefore, was simple; approach suspicious, probably hostile villages, or else live off the jungle.

It was now too dark to cut bamboo and thorn-armed vines to make an entanglement about the camp, but with heavy bladed *parangs,* the seamen chopped grass for mosquito smudges. With nothing else to grab during the hasty disembarkation, Carson had taken several pieces of sail cloth. These made a bunk for Ahmat.

The acrid fumes of the smudge had scarcely begun to blanket the fugitives when from the river came the sound of a motorboat approaching the one which had headed off the rebels and driven them ashore; the convoy from Panjang had finally caught up.

"They got her off the mud bank," Carson told the seamen. "It's not tin they want, it's our heads. Do any of you know this country?"

"We know only the sea, *tuan,*" was the answer, "and our own home."

"You can go inland with me and Ahmat," Carson said, "or you can go back to the river and say that the skipper and I are dead, and that none of this was your fault, and that you're all good fellows."

By the murky light of the smudge, he watched them exchange glances, and make as if to speak; but before any could decide, Carson went on, "Sleep on it, and tell me in the morning after you've eaten."

CARSON spent the night hunched beside the smudge fire, and as he believed, not sleeping at all, since Ahmat muttered constantly, and called for water; yet he must have slept, for two things startled him into sharper consciousness. First, somewhat before dawn, engines roared; the two motorboats were cruising upstream. Second, three men, including the *serang,* were missing, which apparently surprised no one but Carson.

He said to the half dozen who remained, "Maybe they've headed downstream to try for a fishing village on the coast. And if they have gone to the Nationalists, it won't make things any

worse for us. While the rice is cooking, a couple of you cut some bamboo and bend this canvas to it, so we can carry the skipper."

Though glum and bedraggled, they accepted the order and set to work. Then, when the scanty ration of rice was eaten, they picked their way from island to island, working toward higher ground. Presently they came on a game trail; but low branches and trailing vines kept the stretcher bearers to a crawl. Between the bite of gnats and mosquitoes, and the scratches inflamed by the poisonous mud of the mangrove swamp, Carson wondered, long before the day ended, whether Ahmat might not be in better shape than any of those who carried him.

That evening, his first task was to loosen the leeches he'd picked up on the march. Some had fattened to the size of his thumb. Though the business end of a cigarette made them loose their grip, each bite would become a festering sore.

The following day, Ahmat's temperature went up. They had to tie him to the stretcher. Carson wanted to laugh and tell the men that he himself was, or presently would be, as completely out of his head as the skipper. His bones ached, an ache different from that of fatigue. He had only a little atabrine left. Malaria was getting ready to throw him.

The chill did not strike until late in the day. Despite the steaming air, he shivered until his teeth rattled. Later, wrapped in a scrap of sail cloth, he hugged the camp fire, and still trembled so violently that he could not eat. However, it was the fever which he dreaded.

The *serang* and his two companions had been right, whether they'd surrendered to the Nationalists, or run the risk of being captured on the coast.

When the two men he had sent to forage came back, they had no game, but they did have bad news. "There is a village. Everyone is watching. We saw four men in uniform, and they had guns."

"But the putt-putt boats—" Carson had to whip his wits to shape a question. "Where are they?"

"We do not hear them, we do not smell them. There are chickens and gardens, but they do us no good."

"Four men with guns," Carson groped.

"Maybe more, we do not see them."

Carson sized them up. "You look as bad as I do. You'd not have a chance, hand to hand. And those guns—you'd still not have a chance against Nationalist troops."

He came to that conclusion naturally enough, judging from the condition of the weapons, and the corrosion on the cartridges. There hadn't been sufficient turnover of ammunition for any of Ahmat's men to have acquired skill as marksmen.

Without waiting for comment, he went on, "We'll swing clear of that village. We'll stretch what rice we have, it'll last a couple more days. They can't leave men at every village. All we have to do is plug along till they are out of men. Then we'll get at vegetable patches and chicken roosts."

Meanwhile, there were bamboo shoots, palm hearts, and the tender tips of ferns to stew with whatever pigeons could be snared. What they needed most of all was a clearing whose drainage and sunlight would be a relief from the steaming dusk of the swamps.

Stumbling under the weight of the wounded skipper, the stretcher bearers followed a trail which swung well away from the river village and its cleared area. For a while, they held a course nearly perpendicular to the general direction of the stream. The earth was no longer as spongy. Carson, taking his turn at going ahead with a *parang* to slash away the low-hanging vines, found less to do than he had expected.

But it was bad enough. Without any burden, he stumbled and wove. The broad-bladed *parang* seemed heavy as a baseball bat—heavy as a railroad tie—yet it bounced at every stroke, instead of shearing the streamers. His ears burned, and his brain began to fry. Color flashes danced before his eyes. A crazy blend of green and red. He mumbled, "Well make up your mind, is it stop or go. . ."

HE BEGAN to wonder who was babbling, he or Ahmat. His lips were cracking, and though he should have been sweating torrents, his face was dry. Outwitting the Nationalists was easier than outrunning malaria. You carried your fever and chills with you.

His legs seemed to be made of over-

cooked macaroni. Right, left, and front became all confused. His ears played all sorts of tricks. He was sure that the men he led were fed up, rightly enough, but he couldn't tell from their remarks whether they were going to gang up on him and take him to the Nationalists to buy themselves food and freedom, or whether they'd let him wander till he dropped.

By looking forward, he denied the growing menace behind him. He didn't dare look back. He was winning. He walked on air. The heavy *parang* became light as a feather. Handy, the way they arranged game trails. The wild creatures couldn't get lost, the tangle on either side was so dense that straying was impossible. Just the thing for dumb animals . . . anyone living in Sumatra had to be dumb. . .

Finally he did look back. There was no one behind him.

Clever chaps, those Malays. And polite —too polite to tell him they were fed up with his fool persistence. They'd go back to get helmets and mustard green uniforms, and guns, and grub; they'd go back to Pulau Panjang to preach Greater Indonesia to the tin miners. You sit on your pratt and share the tin, while the Dutch and Soekarno have conversations at Malino . . . *rijstafel,* a heap of rice as big as a haystack, and sauce loaded with all the spices in creation . . . slices of orange cooked in molasses . . . fried bananas . . . smoked fish . . . bits of chicken floating in pepper sauce hotter'n the hobs of hell . . . toasted coconut and toasted peanuts . . . and forty other side dishes, and Bols gin, and quinine . . . lots of quinine on your *rijstafel,* and lots of conversation in Celebes. . .

Another hundred miles and you're out of the swamps, and you're in the high mountains, and malaria hasn't a chance . . . never mind the quinine, I'll take gin instead . . . Bols gin, in the glazed earthenware jugs . . . they started making Bols in 1575, and you can make a lot of gin in three hundred and seventy-one years. . .

Then Carson stood fast. The heavy *parang* flew out of his hand; he'd slashed at vacancy. He was looking across a broad clearing dappled with ruddy light. Beyond the tin-roofed bungalow at the further edge were rubber trees, tall and well kept, their tops intermingling, roofing dusky arcades.

A voice like thunder in the Sunda Strait bawled, "Fore!"

Then a sharp smack. Carson ducked for cover. He fell on his face. A white ball came bounding over the clearing. A man cursed. The bull-bellowing frightened all the birds and all the monkeys. Carson, who had heard cursing on land and sea, listened incredulously, and then with awe. He quit groping for his *parang,* and managed to get to his knees. By clutching at a palm trunk, he kept himself upright.

Of course they played golf in Sumatra. Nothing puzzled Carson except the man's frightful cursing, for the ball, landing on a green which he had at first not noticed, rolled into the cup, a hole in one. Then he saw the player, still several hundred yards away.

The man wore shorts, a white shirt, and sun helmet. He towered mountainously. Three others followed him, almost running to keep up with his long stride: a Malay caddy wearing a gilt embroidered jacket, red turban, multicolored sarong,

CAN YOUR SCALP PASS THE
*F-N TEST?
*The Famous Finger Nail Test
1 "It's F-N, the test for men!" Scratch your head —if you find dryness or loose dandruff you need Wildroot Cream-Oil. Buy the large economy size.
YOUR HAIR CAN LOOK LIKE THIS WITH NEW
WILDROOT CREAM-OIL
2 Only a little Wildroot Cream-Oil can do a big job for your hair. Keeps your hair well groomed all day long without a trace of that greasy, plastered down look! Get Wildroot Cream-Oil from your barber or toilet goods counter.
CREAM-OIL CHARLIE SAYS: "IT CONTAINS LANOLIN!"
3 And TUNE IN: 2 NETWORK SHOWS! "The Adventures of Sam Spade" Sun. evenings, CBS Network; "King Cole Trio Time" Sat. afternoons, NBC Network.
WILDROOT CREAM-OIL HAIR TONIC
LANOLIN

The quartet, not observing Carson, halted at the green.

and a sash into which was thrust a straight-bladed *sundang;* a Malay bearer, just as colorfully dressed, carried a gold-fringed parasol; and finally, a Chinese wearing only knee-length pants and a mushroom-shaped straw hat. The Chinese' neck and shoulders were proportioned like those of a water buffalo, but his arms and legs, though muscular, were slender.

The quartet, not observing Carson, halted at the green. The ruddy-faced giant raised his sun helmet, brushed back a tremendous shock of white hair, then knelt and carefully shaped a tee. He hefted and rejected club after club. Finally, his choice made, he stepped well to one side, parasol bearer darting after him.

"Ah Hing!" he boomed, and handed the club to the Chinese.

Ah Hing waggled the club, squinted,

drew a deep breath. Finally, he looked over to catch the white man's eye.

"Very good, Ah Hing!"

Ah Hing drove. The shaft whistled; the impact had the smack of a military rifle. He bowed formally, offering the club to the white man who, as though carrying on with a well-ordered ritual, cursed ferociously, then handed it to the caddy.

Carson, convinced that this was no more than an unusual twist of fever delirium, stepped out and said, "That's a hell of a way to play golf, hiring a Chinaman to hit the ball!"

The big man faced about, cupping his hand to his ear. "Eh, what's that? What's that?" he demanded, in English. "My dear fellow, it'd lower white prestige if I struck the blasted ball myself. Er . . .I daresay you're Mr. Carson? I'm Eustace Dibble, been expecting you—welcome to Dibble Acres—er, give him a hand, Ah Hing! He's quite done in."

And that bit of British understatement was Carson's last impression for some hours to come.

CHAPTER IV

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

THE way Carson sized it up, being delirious was mighty pleasant work if you found the right spot; and here, he saw no room for improvements. Sometimes a blond girl who spoke English with an accent came to bring chow or medicine; again, it was a Malay woman, no longer young, but nevertheless lovely because of her splendid eyes, and a dignity that royalty seldom achieved. Then, the miracle of clean sheets, and over his bed, a series of fans suspended from the ceiling and moved by a jerkline.

"Beats tin diggings all to hell," he mused, admiring his clean hands.

When his head cleared enough for him to shape questions, he missed the blond girl. The Malay woman apparently couldn't understand a word he said. She smiled as from the remembrance of a far-off and very pleasant world of her own. Carson began to doubt that he'd ever seen sunrise bring red glints from a white girl's tawny golden hair. He decided that the white-haired giant was equally preposterous.

The roar of a motor made him sit up, tense, trembling, and in a sweat not deriving from fever. Fumes of gas and lube drifted in through the screened window which gave him a view of the clearing. But it wasn't a PT boat. A motorcycle roared past.

The rider was Eustace Dibble. He sat his mount like a cavalryman, and carried a lance. The cycle swerved. The lance flicked into line. It came up, and with a small white stake impaled on the point. Dibble swooped out of the window's view, and without pause, gunned into sight again, fresh lance in hand. Up came another peg driven into the green.

This went on for nearly an hour, though all but the start of Dibble's tent-pegging was beyond Carson's field of vision. Later, the floor shook under the master's tread. The door panel shuddered at his tap. He stamped in, lance in hand.

"Feeling better? By Jove, rest *has* helped you! Think you could join us at dinner? Daresay you didn't bring dinner clothes—er, Ah Hing will tend to that, clever chap, Ah Hing."

He pulled up a chair, jabbed the lance-head into the floor, and cocked one knee over the other. "Tough going, eh? No doubt you could do with a drink?" He clapped his hands. "Ah Hing! *Brandi pani lao!*"

The broad-shouldered Chinese golfer, now wearing white pants and jacket, came trotting in with a coffin shaped bottle of "'AVK" and a pair of tumblers. Dibble poured, and with a heavy hand.

Carson tried to sit on the edge of his bunk, and found that he could. He looked at Dibble, and then fingered his pajama sleeve.

"Ah Hing cut yours down to fit?"

Dibble's laughter shook the room. "Drink up! Your good health, sir!"

Carson downed the oily Holland gin. "Splendid place you have here. You British do know how to make things comfortable."

Dibble's white eyebrows bristled. "I beg your pardon. I am a Dutch citizen. Have been, for a number of years."

Carson gestured toward the clearing. "Ah—um—I was judging from your warlike game—um—tent pegging, isn't it?"

"Oh *that?* Doubtless would fool you. Truth of it is, I spent a good many years on the Northwest Frontier. Peshawar Lancers. Had to resign, finally."

Carson gulped, fumbled with his glass, and coughed.

DIBBLE leaned forward, and explained, confidentially, "A man can bear so much, and no more. They motorized the Peshawar Lancers. Fancy it—motorized lancers. Utterly absurd. So I resigned my commission, and came to Sumatra to plant rubber."

"And to practice a bit of motorized tent pegging."

"Suitable horses," Mr. Dibble answered, sadly, "couldn't endure this climate. Ah . . . you were developing tin diggings in Pulau Panjang."

"I must have been out of my head and talking sense for a change. While we're at it, you might explain—but look here, even before my men could have told you, you called me by name—how's Ahmat doing, or did my men—his men—"

Carson, thoroughly tangled, stopped short for a fresh start, but Dibble gave him no chance. "Ahmat's doing nicely, amazing vitality. Oh, my calling you by name? Why, the villagers told me all about the Nationalist patrol looking for you chaps, warned me, as it were."

"Oh." Then, "But when'd you come back?"

"I never left Sumatra. Sweated out the entire war. Friendly natives, you know."

"Friendly natives?" Carson echoed. "Barring a few exceptions, they hate a white man's guts, got no damn use for us, not as a class."

"Can't blame them. Our own bloody fault. I'm rather the exception. If I do say so myself, I understand getting along with them, venture to say that if I'd been at Pulau Panjang, that scoundrel of a Jamil'd never taken over."

Carson got on his feet, swayed, but held the stance. "If I had anything to bet—"

Dibble's eyes glinted electric blue. "You still have your diggings. Will you bet me an interest, as it appears or as it actually is, that I could turn the whole blasted island against the Nationalist idea?"

"Nationalist *idea?*"

"Certainly, *idea.* I'd hardly venture to warrant that the people of Pulau Panjang could take on everything that the Nationalists could possibly send, if they were determined."

Carson shook his head. "If you lost, I'd be no better off than I am now. If you won, what'd it gain me?"

Dibble waggled index and second finger. "You'd learn something, sir. You'd learn something. Something that'd stand you in good stead when you go back to the States."

"States?"

"Just as many idiots there as in Pulau Panjang," Dibble said, cheerily, and got up from his chair. "Suppose you dress—I'll be waiting in the library." Then he raised his voice: "Ah Hing! Ah Hing, blast it! Help Mr. Carson dress!"

"I can dress myself if you'll stake me to clothes, and how the hell do you know I'm going back to the States?"

Mr. Dibble did not answer. Carson went on, "You forgot your spear!"

Then Ah Hing came in with clothes, a bucket of water, and a collapsible rubber tub.

Later, he showed Carson to the screened veranda fronting the dining room. There he saw that the blond girl had not been illusion, and that he had underestimated her attractions. What he had taken for a nurse's uniform was a severe white dress, pieced out of a well worn damask table

. . . a bit of motorized tent-pegging.

cloth. Her feet were small enough to wear embroidered Malay slippers, and her legs didn't suffer from lacking hosiery. With out any makeup, she had color and sparkle, despite the weariness which showed about the eyes. She smiled when she saw Carson, and got up from the rattan chair.

Dibble, ruddy under his tan, loomed up in his shiny dinner dress. His jacket, though perceptibly threadbare, had not turned greenish from age. The heavy jaw, the jutting nose, the broad forehead and shaggy brows gave him a monumental expression: the *pukka sahib* from India, the *sahib* who hadn't existed for years, and who had never existed except in Kipling-Mundy fiction.

He cleared his throat, and gestured toward the Malay woman who had waited on Carson. She was trim and dainty, and very straight; she gave distinction to the jacket and skirt of the country. A filmy scarf draped her shoulders and head. Except for the nose, she made him think of high-bred Spanish women he had seen in Border towns, back in the States: black hair, drawn back from the face; olive skin, and features combining delicacy with strength; woman utterly without adornment or artifice, depending solely on exquisite modeling of cheekbones and chin and brow. Here was beauty undimmed by age, independent of color, unmarred by the fine lines which time had brought.

This, and those magnificent Malay eyes, with a suggestion of slant, and of almond shape: Carson couldn't begin to guess her age. Thirty-five, which is old for her race, or forty?

Dibble was saying, "Amai, may I present Mr. Carson? Carson, this is my wife, Mrs. Dibble."

After Amai answered in English, Carson met Cornelia de Vries. Then the Malay queen took Carson's arm, and they went to the dining room, where an enormous *rijstafel* waited: a mountain of rice, and twenty servants, each carrying two different side dishes and relishes.

A CORK blasted. Carson started perceptibly. Cornelia smiled in sympathy and entire understanding. Ah Hing, supervising the pouring of wine whispered threats of hideous death to the bungler who had let a cork pop.

Dibble got to his feet. Glass in huge hand, he proposed, "To the bride!"

Cornelia looked puzzled; later, Carson was to remember how clearly he noticed this, despite his own perplexity as he got up. After a moment of gaping he decided that possibly the mad Britisher had just married the widow of a Malay dignitary. He looked to Amai for a clue.

Amai was smiling, three quarters inwardly, a secret little Asiatic smile which told nothing at all.

Then Dibble boomed, "I say, you're entitled to be confused. Dash it all! I knew there was something I'd forgotten to tell you. Cornelia's marrying you after dinner."

Carson lowered his glass. The chair behind him scraped. The blond girl's eyes opened wide and blue, the long lashes getting a full lift. She said, lightly, "Eustace, don't you think that before dinner would have been more appropriate?"

Carson chimed in glibly, "You are reversing the routine, aren't you?"

"Daresay I am. But no matter, no matter. Long as it's legal nothing else counts."

Carson patted his own temple and cheek. He wasn't running a temperature. Cornelia had smiled, but without sparkle. Worry grew in her eyes, and apprehension. The man meant it. Carson had barely sat down when he got up, abruptly.

"See here, Mr. Dibble. Am I mad, or are you?"

Dibble beamed. "That's my secret, don't mind telling you. The Malays for miles about believe I'm quite mad—helps enormously, their believing I'm quite clubby with Allah. They like me, but they're afraid *not* to like me!"

Cornelia got up. She knocked over her glass. Her cheek twitched, and she licked her lips before she could speak. "I'd not marry you if you were the last man on earth!" she cried, and ran from the dining room. "I don't care if I never get to the States!"

Dibble glared right, he glared left. "Sit down, Carson! No wonder she's upset, you looked as though I'd sentenced you to death. Damn it, sir, when I was your age, I'd—"

"What is this?" Carson yelled. "What kind of idiocy—am I crazy, are you crazy—what—"

Ah Hing and the other servants vanished.

The overhead fans had stopped jerking back and forth.

Outside, mosquitoes buzzed. Insects dashed their heads to pieces against the screen. From the village came the thump of drums and the wail of a Malay song. Amai smiled at her plate.

Finally, Dibble answered, "Cornelia has no parents, no kinfolk, nothing at all, she's the sole survivor of her family. The Indies are no place for her. Immigration quotas, Yankee nonsense would keep her here for years. Marry her, and she enters your unusual country without let or hindrance."

"I've got a tin mine! I'm getting it back if it takes till judgment day! I can't have any woman clogging my moves. Thanks a lot for everything, but I'm taking my men and moving on."

Dibble clapped his hands. Malay and Chinese servants materialized from several doorways. "You're staying till Cornelia marries you. I'm a magistrate. It'll be quite legal. Please sit down and eat, before I resort to force feeding you!"

AH HING and an equally muscular Malay led Carson down the hall, following Eustace Dibble. The prospective groom, certain that he could not break away, let them herd him along. He said, "You're forgetting something."

Dibble, about to tap at a hall door, turned around, cupped his ear. "Eh? What's that? What am I forgetting?"

"The bride's father should be following me, carrying a musket."

Dibble considered for a moment, and shook his head. "I am acting *in loco parentis,* and I rarely find threats necessary. Secret of my success, you know."

He tapped at the door. "May we come in?" Getting no answer, he twisted the knob.

Cornelia faced them from the middle of the room. Dibble rubbed his hands together, and said, blandly, "Purely a formality, my dear. Mr. Carson's a gentleman, and furthermore, as soon as you're man and wife, I'll engage to set you down in Singapore. He'll not be sufficient of an ass to wish to return to that tin mine."

"How delightful! He saves me from Sumatra, and I save him from a mine. And the witnesses have to twist his arms to hustle him to his bride."

"Er—ah—poor chap's naturally—um—diffident—dash it all, a fellow always feels the need of moral support, as it were. Would you believe it, I had a skinful of brandy when the first Mrs. Dibble married me—charming lady, but my courage needed bucking up. Now, Carson, he's quite sober—er, will you be kind enough to stand over there—take the young lady's hand while—"

Ah Hing whispered, "Do what he says, *now!*"

Cornelia must have caught the whisper. She whirled, snatched an alarm clock and hurled it at Dibble. "Get out of here!" she screamed. "I'll walk and swim to Singapore, I'll walk to Palembang!"

The clock, missing its mark, bounced off Ah Hing's head. His Malay aid yelled, "I take refuge with Allah!" and bolted. A hand mirror overtook him. A vase smashed against the door jamb. Dibble, in full flight, ducked a carafe.

By the time the door slammed, Carson was making good time down the hall. Dibble overtook him, caught him by the shoulder, and gasped, "Er—pay no attention, my dear fellow—charming girl, but impulsive—give her a few days, she'll be quite reasonable. . . Ah Hing! *Brandi pani lao!*"

"Thanks, but I don't care for a drink," Carson answered.

"Very well, very well. I loathe drinking alone, and dash it all, I do need a drink, but please yourself. Good night, sir."

Carson went to his room to talk it over with himself; but a one-man debating society was ineffective. He could find not a single sound reason why Dibble's proposition should be called outrageous, all the more so since many months would have to elapse before the conferences at Malino restored order in the Indies—and no telling what arrangements the Dutch and the Nationalists would make with respect to natural resources. The rich deposits of Billiton were a government monopoly, and in the end, all mineral rights might revert to whatever government the clashing powers made up between them.

"By the time the Dutch get theirs, and the Indonesians take their divvy, it's damn little I'll come out with," he had to admit. "Sure I could leave, but I don't believe in shotgun weddings!"

He patted the growing lump on his head. Even a small shoe, moving fast, packs a wallop. Courting Cornelia was a hazardous occupation.

Carson tiptoed from the bungalow and made for the group of bamboo houses in which Dibble's servants and plantation hands lived. A faint light came from one of the nipa-thatched shacks.

In a low voice, he hailed the house. It was a good guess—one of the *prahu's* crew answered. He climbed the ladder.

AHMAT was sitting up with several of his men. After greetings, Carson squatted on the bamboo slats and accepted a chew. The skipper, though he looked peaked, was clear eyed and had a good color. Ahmat said, "I named you in my prayers, and Allah has been good."

"They told me it was well with you, but for some days the fever left me with no sense. I couldn't come any sooner."

"There is a road to Palembang," Ahmat said. "One of the roads the Dutchmen built. All the bridges are blown up, it is overgrown with creepers, but a road is a road."

"Can you stand the trip?"

Ahmat countered, "A bullet is one thing, fever is another. Can you walk to Palembang?"

Farid, who was pock-marked, and had the brow and nose of an ape, cut into the exchange: *"Tuan,* is this march necessary? The crazy Englishman has a putt-putt boat of his own, his people told me this."

For Carson to explain why he considered the trip urgent would only convince the Malays that he was worse than Dibble; he'd be tagged as a pure fool, whereas Dibble's oddities were evidence that Allah especially favored the man.

"Verily, this is a good place," another seaman observed. "Though we miss our own people, and our own village."

"That is just it," Carson answered. "The English are not my people, and the Dutch are not. But in Palembang there are people from my own village."

Ahmat nodded. *"Inshallah,* we go to Palembang. I did not know of that highway. Today, I walked a little, tomorrow, I walk further. Strength comes from Allah!"

Then, without warning, a woman spoke from the threshold. "Wisdom also comes from Allah," she said, "and clearly, he had none for you! Some are born fools, some learn how to be fools—and here I see men who improve on their birth!"

Amai had come to judgment. Carson go up. He was not surprised when the others also arose. She then said, in English, "Mr. Carson, that man isn't fit to travel. You should be ashamed of yourself. Let Ahmat have the rest he needs."

Her imperious gesture accorded with her voice. She stepped to the veranda, and achieved the amazing feat of walking down the trick ladder, instead of back down the rungs. Carson knew better than to try to imitate the graceful lady; he felt awkward enough as it was.

When he set foot on ground, Amai said, "You're acting childishly! My husband can and will take you to Singapore."

"He's made a perfect fool of both of us!"

"He's acting with kindness, he wishes to do the young lady a good turn," Amai retorted. "And she's an idiot! Don't you worry, I'll talk sense into her!"

"But I don't want a woman flung at me! She can get to the States somehow or other. Or she can wait till the convention at Malino arranges for law and order."

"She has no one, nothing in the world. He'll buy her ticket, if that's worrying you. And she does have some distant relatives in your country. You won't have her on your hands. After all the broken glassware, you needn't worry!"

"It's the principle of the thing."

Amai smiled knowingly. "Think it over, and meanwhile, rest and relax."

She left him in the living room.

Carson spent perhaps half an hour smoking a cheroot. He finally decided that despite the risk, he had to have a word with the only sane, white person on the estate, so he tiptoed down the hall and tapped at Cornelia's door.

"I'm not marrying anyone!" she answered.

"Neither am I, but I'd like to talk to you."

"Mmmm . . . well . . . oh, all right."

She opened the door just a little. She smiled, opened it wide. Then, closing it after him, she began to laugh. "You were the silliest looking thing I ever saw! I couldn't help throwing things, this place is driving me wild, I must be crazy, everyone has been lovely to me—sit down, won't you?"

CARSON sat on the edge of a chair. "This is a cozy spot, but just so much of it, and I'll be making myself a bamboo horse and spending an hour a day on the *maidan,* tent-pegging, or even playing polo with myself. You want to get out of here. Now don't throw anything—"

"Promise you, I won't. Go on?"

"Well—my skipper's men were talking about a bombed, rutted up, over-grown road to Palembang, not far from here. They were willing to hike, but Mrs. D broke that up. They must be mind-readers around here. Palembang'd be the first step, now that British and Dutch and American engineers are back—this is strictly on the level, and—uh—in an emergency, I mean—"

"Oh, do quit stuttering, please!" She smiled, dazzlingly, and laid a soft hand on his arm. "I'm neither afraid of you, nor afraid of being gossiped about. It's merely being thrown at someone, that maddening British take-it-for-granted!"

Carson relaxed and hitched back in his chair. "He has a motorboat, somewhere. Though it'd be too low-down, borrowing the man's boat, after he brought me back to life."

"Well, he'd use that same boat after—"

"For our honeymoon cruise?"

"Yes, so it'd serve him right if we borrowed it. You could bring it back. You're not going to the States."

"Wait a second, how'd you buy a ticket from Singapore? He said—"

"What he thought! I still have a few pieces of my mother's jewelry—diamonds—not awfully large, but quite good—"

A furtive *scratch-scratch-scratch* at the door made Cornelia check herself abruptly. She got up, caught Carson's arm. He whispered, "To hell with 'em!"

"*Tuan!* Let me in, it is imporant."

"One of Ahmat's men," Carson said. "Shall I?"

"I don't mind."

She opened the door. Farid, the pock-marked seaman, stood there, wide-eyed. "Some men come from the river village," he said. "They say the putt-putt boat is come back, not finding you up the river."

"Are they leaving when they pick up their four men?"

"They can't cross the bar with low tide, they have to stay, that is worry us, if they stay too long."

"Just one putt-putt boat?"

"Just one, *tuan.* The other one, she went home two-three days past, this one stops preaching to the villages, so they join the Ankatan Muda Society, the Young Nationalist Society."

Carson turned to Cornelia. "They may stay here till the tide after the next, looting or preaching." He took her by both shoulders. "Look here! Ahmat's crew can gang up on those chaps, taking them by surprise. Grab the boat, and we're off. Ahmat can stand a boat ride."

"That'd be frightfully risky, those Nationalists have rifles."

"After what you went through, getting all the way from Surabaya to here—and I hit a few bumps myself—what do you say?"

She drew a deep breath. Her eyes and her face glowed. Then she shook her head, resolutely. "Some of Ahmat's men may be hurt or killed. No, I can't."

"I'll turn the trick on my own account!"

"Don't you dare . . . oh, Mrs. Dibble! You startled me!"

Amai was at the threshold, regal as ever. "He speaks like a man, and you, like a fool of a woman. Of course there are risks, men are made to face risks. Go, Mr. Carson. I'll get men from the *kampong* to help you."

Carson regarded Amai with amazement. "You change your mind quickly."

"Dragging a wounded man to Palembang is one thing. This is a fair risk. You can ambush the lot, you have a good chance."

"Thank you, Mrs. Dibble." He looked her over, from tiny feet to proudly carried head. "But you're frightfully anxious to get us out, all of a sudden."

"Of course I am!" Then, without any malice, "Do you think I want any girl of her age, and of her complexion, in this house any longer than necessary?"

"Some men come from the river village," Farid said. "They say putt-putt boat is come back."

Carson gaped. "But he was trying to throw her at me, he couldn't possibly be interested in her."

Amai smiled cryptically. "Please don't try to get the answer, though you could, if you relaxed long enough to use your imagination." She turned to Cornelia. "You won't have much packing to do, my dear, but you must not waste any time."

Carson said to Amai, "I'll waste none. Just so long as *he* doesn't wake up and stop the show."

"Don't worry about my husband," the half-pint queen told him. "He's been drinking to the bride, and for once, he overdid it."

CHAPTER V

THE WINDS OF ALLAH

CARSON, as he explained his plan for catching the PT's crew by surprise, found that his mind was not following his words. He was too busy resenting Dibble. . . *"If the old fool'd only kept his mouth shut, and let nature take her course. . .* We don't care how many of the crew are aboard, we'll hit 'em from the stern. . . *Maybe she hasn't such a lousy disposition if she's handled right. . .* If they have a guard posted, all the better, you can always handle a sentry. . . *No wonder she got sore, with me looking at her as though I'd drawn the Witch of Endor for a blind date. . .*"

As the men finally came down from the shack, Carson turned to say to Ahmat, "You stay here! You're still shaky."

At the crunch of heavy feet, a few yards behind him, Carson whirled about, and faced the master of Dibble Acres, looming up in the first moonglow.

"Stop this nonsense! I'll have no guerrilla warfare on my estate."

"Too late, Mr. Dibble. We are going to grab that boat, and to hell with yours! Don't try moving me to tears about Cornelia's distress, she's going along."

"Eh? What's that? What's that? She's going with you?"

"Precisely. Soon as we take those Nationalists to pieces."

"But she can't go—preposterous—quite improper! See here, Carson, I insist that you two be married. I can't tolerate this—this junket!"

"We agreed to go cruising in sin."

Dibble rearranged his features into granite rigidity. "Come with me at once, I shall persuade her."

"Skip it! I'm busy."

"You refuse?"

"What do you think I've been saying?"

Dibble coughed. "Then I shall at once warn the Nationalist crew to be on guard. This is easily done, and without revealing the source."

Dibble's face meant, "No wedding, no raid." Despite the presence of half a dozen armed men, he was very sure of himself, and in this he was right, except for one detail: he had not entirely stared Carson into submission. And Carson, knowing that his best punch could not shake the man, used his head. He butted Dibble in the stomach, knocking him over backward, breathless and helpless.

"Get me something to tie him with," Carson commanded, "and a scrap of sarong to gag him." Then, in Dibble's ear, "Sorry, old chap, but no wedding bells tonight."

After stowing Dibble in the shack, they went to join the two men Amai had contributed to the enterprise. These were waiting, ready to guide Carson through the jungle which separted Dibble Acres from the river village.

The trail was hard to follow because it forked, doubled back, and branched again; and when, finally, it split fanwise into a maze whose masked openings led into the gardens behind the village, Carson understood why no river prowlers had stumbled into the existence of Dibble Acres.

Rustling bamboos, and broad-leaved banana plants marked the further limit of the clearing. Through rifts in this barrier, the thatched houses, widely spaced, were visible. When the raiders assembled, they filed along the upstream edge of the clearing.

Presently, Carson was at the river's edge. The PT lay at anchor about halfway between the near bank and the path of brilliance which the moon traced midstream. Along the bank, almost hidden in shadow, were the canoes of the villagers, and fishing nets spread out to dry.

Carson studied the PT's deck, which was cluttered with drums of gas, and what seemed to be bags heaped up and made fast. Her machine guns, just aft of the bridge, reached up from her deck cargo. Though he could look down the full seventy-foot length of the PT, the spot where Carson crouched on the bank was not high enough for him to see what was forward of the bridge.

The current was sluggish, yet eddies made her sway sufficiently for the shadows on deck to change and shift deceptively. Finally he whispered to the ape-faced seaman at his side, "Farid, you see anyone on watch?"

"Nobody smoking, nobody talking, nobody moving, maybe somebody looking, maybe not," Farid answered, after several moments.

No white man could have done a nicer job of passing the buck. A plan always looks good until the moment of carrying it out. Finally, it came to Carson, and he pointed, saying, "This clump of trees, its shadow is moving closer to the boat. When it reaches the stern, we'll have the best chance."

One of the men Amai had sent knew of a path leading to the water's edge. They followed it down to the row of inverted dugouts. Then, huddled against the bank, they surrendered to mosquitoes, and the slow motion of the moon. When the lengthening shadow had at last reached its mark, Carson nudged Farid.

"Take two dugouts," he said. "And a net."

"Why the net, *tuan?*"

"To foul the propeller. If we don't get them the first rush, we'll at least keep them from getting away."

THE dugouts shoved off without a sound. When they were far enough from the bank, paddles were shipped. The current took charge. Slowly, and separated by a thirty-foot gap, the narrow boats drifted toward their mark. They looked like driftwood, for the passengers bent forward until their bodies seemed to be irregularities of a floating log.

Carson, twisting his neck until it promised to take a permanent set, watched the gap shorten. Time and again, shadows aboard the PT convinced him that men lurked, ready to man the machine guns. Finally, his boat, the leading one, was so near that the machine guns could not possibly be depressed sufficiently to rake the dugouts.

Then he was at the PT's stern and shoving the dugout to the right, to clear the plywood hull so that there would be neither thump nor scrape. She rode low in the water. However, that favorable detail was offset by the dragging seconds of the other dugout's approach—and Carson began to hear sounds. There must be a lookout on deck, stirring about. From somewhere in the seventy-foot hull came a muttering and a mumbling.

Carson wondered where he'd ever find the guts for making that first move to board the prize, to go up, and over the side, and into that clutter of bales and bags, a confusion whose every shadow could hold an armed enemy. Surprise, but in which direction?

The hand that had been against the plywood hull now pressed vacancy. She'd sneaked away. Then he realized that she moved, she made headway. He wasted a moment gaping perplexedly before he noted that her cable was slack. That knowledge was the fuse to explode Carson's hard sustained calmness.

A shout, a leap, a grab, a scramble—and he was up, and over the side. A sudden rush of panic had prodded him. It was not until he was aboard, until he was sick from fear of what his rashness had done, that he knew why he had moved, and yelled to those following him. He had done all this because the slipping of the cable would alarm her watch, and men running aft would spot the raiders.

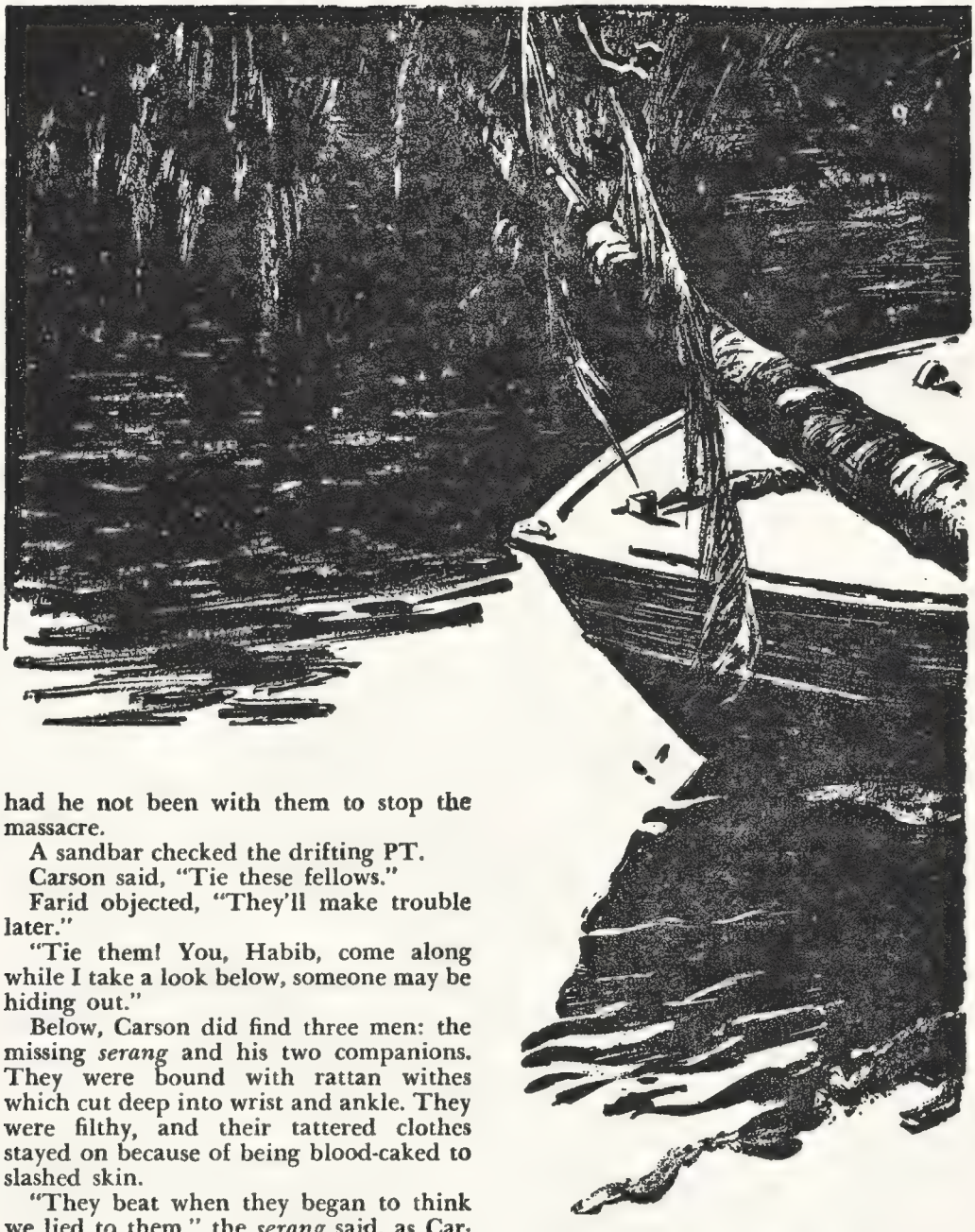
Carson, well into the clutter of deck freight, hoped that he'd be able to explain himself to his men. At the same time he was sure there'd be none left to hear him, even if he himself did survive. The PT's crew had come to life with a mutter which swelled into a shout and a scrambling as the men made hurriedly for topside.

Men wearing helmets, and bareheaded men came up. Some had rifles. Others had grabbed *kreeses,* pistols, daggers, *parangs.* They knew something had happened, but didn't know what. Some darted forward. Others milled about in the space between bridge and the deck. All the while, Carson's men, howling and screeching, swarmed over the fantail.

Carson, lurching out from the clutter of cargo, got busy with his 7 mm. Nambu; not much, as pistols went, but the little automatic had eight cartridges, and it didn't jam.

Rifles blazed erratically. The tight-packed crew had no room to work, and Carson's fire, delivered from short range, covered the rush of his men. They bounded from bale to bag. The three with Arisakas blazed away, raking bridge and deck and river. Then they threw their rifles down and set to work with *kreese* and *parang.*

Carson shoved home a second clip, but he had no more use for the Nambu. His men swept him along. They would have made a clean sweep of twice their number,



had he not been with them to stop the massacre.

A sandbar checked the drifting PT.

Carson said, "Tie these fellows."

Farid objected, "They'll make trouble later."

"Tie them! You, Habib, come along while I take a look below, someone may be hiding out."

Below, Carson did find three men: the missing *serang* and his two companions. They were bound with rattan withes which cut deep into wrist and ankle. They were filthy, and their tattered clothes stayed on because of being blood-caked to slashed skin.

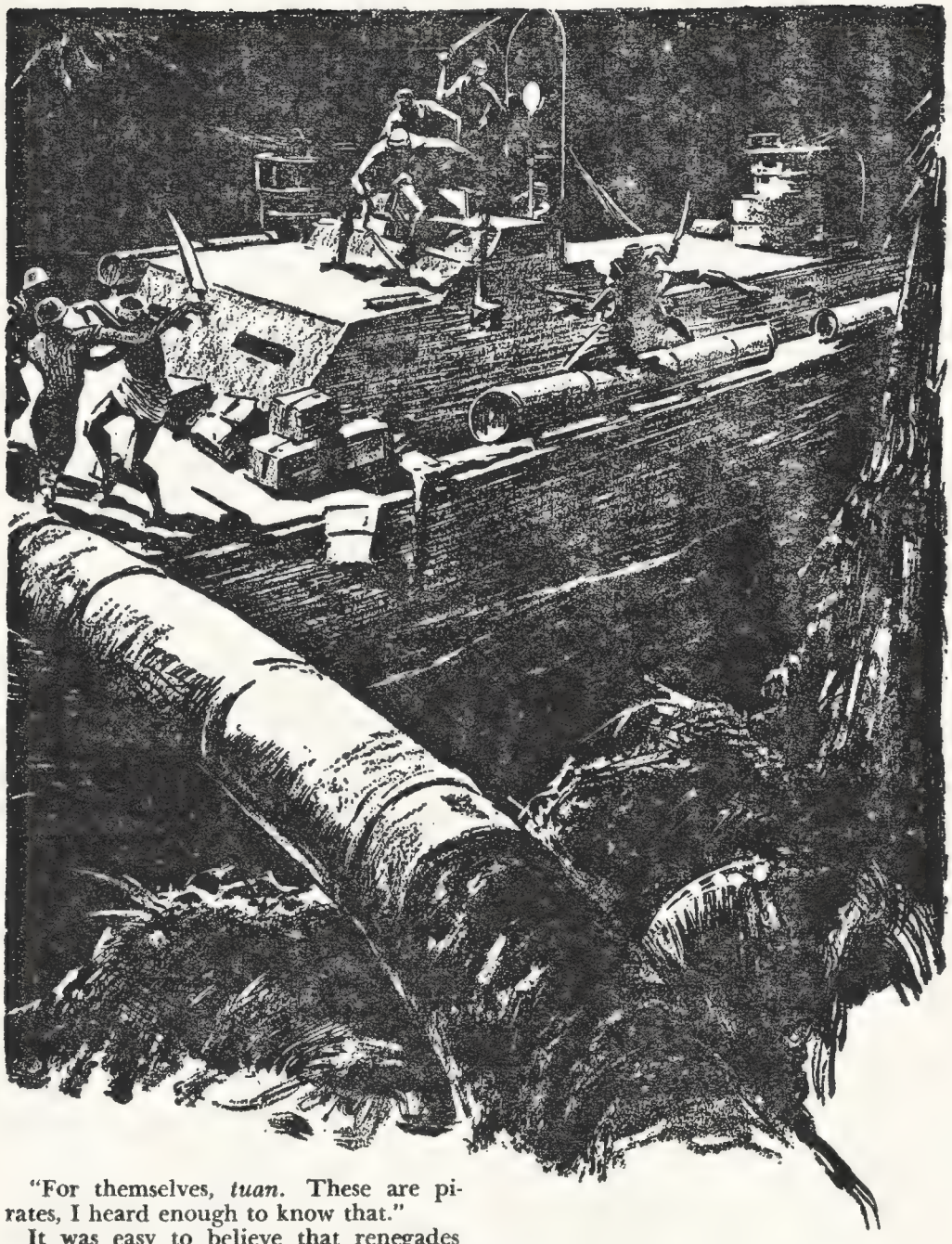
"They beat when they began to think we lied to them," the *serang* said, as Carson knelt to cut the rattan bonds.

The two others added, talking at once, "We went to say that you had all been killed. Not being fools, they didn't believe us. When they beat us awhile, we said you were going to Kotta Batu, far up the river. They believed for a while—"

Carson cut in, "From the shape you're in, I'll believe you for keeps! Where'd they get all the loot?"

The *serang* answered, "From each village. Pepper, and cutch, tobacco and coffee."

"For the government, instead of taxes in cash?"



***They bounded from bale to bag—the three with Arisakas blazed away, then they threw their rifles down and set to work with* kreese *and* parang.**

"For themselves, *tuan.* These are pirates, I heard enough to know that."

It was easy to believe that renegades used the Nationalist flag as a front for loot and extortion; and when Carson went on deck with the *serang,* he said, "Keep an eye on things, while I get Ahmat. First, we have to get off the sandbar, and then get ride of this deck cargo. They can use it in the village."

THE day was well spent before Carson was sufficiently familiar with the PT to risk running to Singapore. He said to Cornelia, who was with him on the bridge, "If we use just one of the engines, we'll have enough fuel. Ahmat knows these waters, I can handle the motor department, so there's a chance. And I hope you know what a chance!"

She laughed, tossed back her blond curls. "Oh, quit wondering! First thing you know, you'll have me worried—and I had my share, while you were pirating the pirates."

"I bet you were frantic!"

"Of course I was! My last chance to get away."

"He'd've taken you to Singapore, finally."

Cornelia shrugged. "This is better. Though there's one thing I don't like."

"What?"

"Leaving without a word with Mr. Dibble and Amai."

Carson pulled a long face. "I felt lousy about that. Hurt the old guy's feelings. Everything I wanted, everything I needed, Ah Hing there with a smile, and swearing he didn't know where the boss was, probably had gone out to inspect the plantation."

As the PT nosed downstream, Ahmat squatted on deck, watching the man who heaved the lead.

"I'm a decoration, he's actually in command," Carson remarked, "and wishing this PT were a decent *prahu* driven by Allah's winds." Then, after a long pause, "It shouldn't be so bad in Holland, things must be getting cleaned up by now."

She nodded. "That's where I belong, I do have some distant relatives there. People seem to have a mania for going to the States, and I had to say something that started him on that crazy business back there."

"He meant well. And if I'd used his methods, maybe I'd kept control of my tin mine."

"You did all right, taking this boat."

Carson shivered. "I'd prefer motorized polo or almost any of Dibble's ways of being quite mad. By the way, I saw his motorboat, finally."

"Does he really have one?"

"Outboard. Never in a million years get to Singapore in it. The old devil was talking for the fun of it."

"What'll you do with the prisoners you're towing in the dugout?"

"They know now the villagers didn't have a hand in the raid, so it'll be safe to give them paddles and set adrift. Ahmat still thinks I am crazy for not mowing them down."

Though crossing the sandbars at the river mouth took all Carson's attention, Cornelia refused to go below. "I'd rather face the spray," she told him, "than choke from engine fumes and rotting fish."

Several times she struck, and it took all three engines to pull her out of the mud. Carson didn't like the sound of the reverse gears. Each time he revved her up, he expected the transmission to let go. Finally, he drew a deep breath, and looked out across the Sunda Sea. He set the throttle, and said to Ahmat, "Take over awhile, I can't remember when I slept last." Then, to Cornelia, "Now the ventilators have a chance. Better go below before you're completely drenched."

At the foot of the companionway, he gestured. "Take your pick of bunks, they're all crummy, and when you're good and seasick, nothing'll matter. Here, spread out that piece of straw matting, or do I have to tuck you in?"

She made a face at him. "I've seen a lot worse than this! I just wanted an excuse to stay on the bridge."

"Hour of shut-eye," he mumbled, "thank God, Ahmat's fresh . . . no coffee . . . be a tough watch . . ."

He didn't hear Cornelia's answer. He didn't feel the pitch and toss, the weave and shudder as the PT met the Sunda Sea. Yet he was too tired to sleep, now that at last he had stretched out. An hour of daylight, and then brief dusk. Dusk and danger . . . somewhere, on some small island not far from the entrance of the Banka Strait, the pirates must have a cache of Japanese fuel . . . had to have . . . a PT drank gas like nothing in this world or the next . . . when they have no more gas, and the engines blow up, they'll have a nice little tin mining business . . . go back to Pulau Panjang and mop up . . . take the superior smile off Captain Kolopakeng's handsome face . . . this is bad as swimming . . . Ahmat's a good guy, hasn't fiddled with the throttle yet

. . . Cornelia's sitting on the edge of the bunk . . . must be Cornelia . . . fellow's not responsible for what he says or does in his sleep . . . boat's pitching too much, she couldn't throw anything . . . when they build better blondes, I don't want Mr. Dibble around to spoil things . . .

He sat up, and so abruptly that he bashed his head. Cornelia was on the edge of the bunk. "Oh—good Lord—" she gasped. "What—"

A machine gun stuttered.

CARSON got on his feet so fast that Cornelia hit the deck with a thump. "I did hear shooting," he yelled, "I wasn't dreaming. Keep your head down! We'll handle 'em!"

But the chatter had ended by the time he got on deck. "What's going on?" Carson demanded.

Ahmat looked over his shoulder. "O *serang!* What is the shooting?"

The *serang* turned from the machine gun turret. "O Captain! The prisoners were trying to escape. So I shot the sons of pigs, and cut the small boat loose."

Ahmat said to Carson, "The prisoners. They tried to escape."

Carson said to the contented *serang*, "Can't say that I blame you, though I don't know where they'd've gone."

Then he noticed that Cornelia had followed him; and it was clear from her face that she'd heard enough to understand. "The *serang,*" she observed, "is remarkably handy with a machine gun."

"What do you mean?"

"There's something odd about it all."

"He might've watched me load it and fire a burst to check up, just before we shoved off."

During the exchange, darkness had fallen; and from the gloom came a familiar voice, saying, "Dash it all, the *serang* would have to be a frightful ass if he couldn't riddle a towed target at such short range."

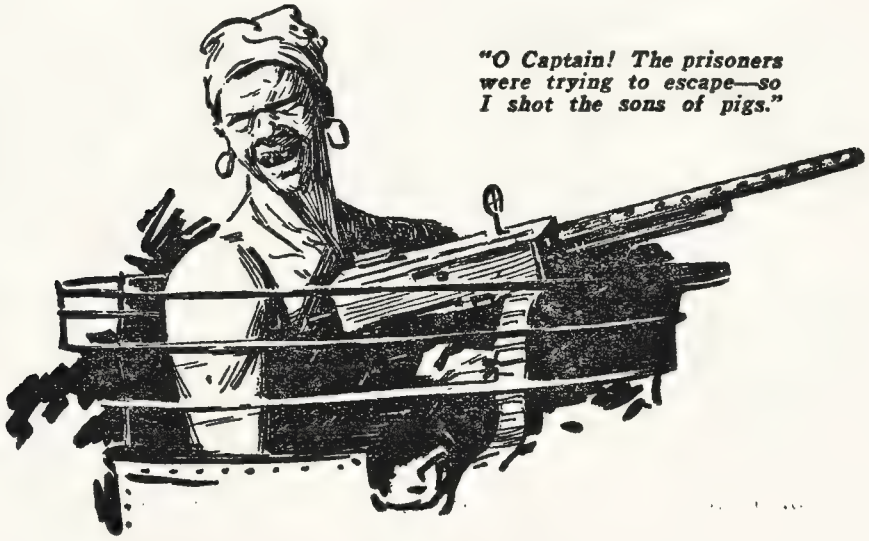
Eustace Dibble stalked into view, before Carson could think of a word to say; and Mrs. Dibble came with him. Carson bowed and said, "I'm awfully glad you're aboard. I tried to see you both before we left."

"Couldn't resist the temptation to stow away," Dibble went on. "Hope you don't mind. Er—your *serang's* a splendid chap . . . I mean the pirates might've concluded that some of my people had—ah—aided and abetted you, and arranged for reprisals if you'd set them adrift. I feel much better about everything."

"Won't you come below, Mrs. Dibble?" Cornelia asked.

"I'll follow suit," Eustace Dibble said. "Frightfully cramped, being wedged in a torpedo tube. And when I heard the *serang's* musketry—"

"Ten to one," Carson said, "you weren't a bit amazed!"



"O Captain! The prisoners were trying to escape—so I shot the sons of pigs."

Mr. Dibble, going below, ignored the insinuation.

Carson wasn't surprised to see Ah Hing come out of the darkness to follow the master of Dibble Acres. "More stowaways than crew," he grumbled to the wind. "Wonder he didn't bring his motorcycle."

As he and Ahmat hauled northward, Carson debated with himself whether Dibble had indeed stowed away to make sure that none of the pirates survived, or whether his underlying motive had been to go to Singapore to look after Cornelia's interests. No doubt that Dibble could make arrangements quite beyond any American's ability.

Ahmat seemingly navigated by intuition and the stars. There was no apparent reason for the changes in course which he gave from time to time, nor the changes in speed.

"Pretty soon, we are off Libukang Uti —that is, in the Bugis language. I don't know, my father didn't know, nobody but Allah knows why the Bugis men call it Banana Island—it has no bananas on it. But you watch, pretty soon, three peaks like sawteeth, on the starboard bow."

Presently, just perceptible against the stars, Carson distinguished the island, and sheered off according to Ahmat's directions.

"O.K., I understand how you knew it when you saw it, but how did you know back there?"

"From passing Nusa Karang."

"But we couldn't see Nusa Karang."

"*Tuan*," the old Malay answered, patiently, "is it ever so dark I don't know this is my own hand? Can you tell me why I know?"

"All right, Ahmat, you know the sea's face, like a friend's face."

"That is at least the half of it."

"I wish I knew the half of why *Tuan* Dibble came aboard."

"He belongs on the land, he is an Englishman, and he wanted to become a Dutchman, and in these three things, there is no sense at all. He does what he does, and the peace upon us. Now, in the space of two smokes, there is Pulau Renda on the port bow, very hard to see."

Then Eustace Dibble came to the bridge. "I say, Carson, you must be frightfully tired, you might let me take over. With Ahmat navigating, it's quite simple, merely watch the dials and indicators, and abide by his directions. The veriest oaf could hardly go wrong, you know."

Carson said, "Ahmat, *Tuan* Dibble understands engines. He'll do exactly what you say. Is it good, or is it no good?"

"You are tired," the old Malay answered. "And it will be good, because if he does what I don't say, we go on a reef and it tears the bottom out of this shell, and Allah knows which of us would live through it."

Carson turned to Dibble: "Don't rev her up, or we'll run out of gas, if she doesn't throw some con rods first. Watch that thermometer, don't let her overheat."

WHAT brought Carson out of his bunk was a repeated blasting which made the boat shudder. By the time he was on deck, he knew that the engine was backfiring, and then, that the engine was dead. Eustace Dibble said, "By Jove, we're quite out of petrol."

Carson stared at the gauge. "It's probably out of kilter. We can't be out of gas. Clean the strainers, they must be plugged," he said, and went aft to execute his own order.

But the gas filters were not plugged. The two thousand gallon tank was empty. Now that the moon had risen, he could see all too plainly the lee shore of a small island. The PT had a splendid chance of being beaten to pieces on the reefs clearly marked by long white lines.

While Ahmat rigged a sea anchor, Carson and his men funneled a barrel of fuel into the tank, and then a second. A question had been growing, but Carson saved his words until he went to the bridge.

"Singapore's out. At the rate she's hogging gas, what we've dumped in is hardly more than enough to nose her into a tidal inlet, if we can find an island with the right kind of coast. Ahmat, where are we, what's the nearest spot to haul for?"

The old Malay answered, "We can make Pulau Panjang, *insha'allah*."

"Pulau Panjang!" Carson eachoed. "Say, if those devils have one of their PT's at the old fort—"

Dibble cut in, exultantly, "Capital! Poetic justice, you know, refueling with pirate petrol."

"Capital, my eye!" Carson gave him a bitter look. "This roaring hoot-nanny would wake 'em all up."

"Daresay it would," Dibble admitted, "but they'd mistake us for fellow Nationalist pirates returning with booty. We'd catch them by surprise."

The engine, once more turning over, pulled her away from the breakers. Ahmat exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah, and may He curse my ancestors if ever I sail a thing without sails!"

"See here," Carson pointed out, "whatever PT may be moored off Government House, may not be gassed up. Lot of good our surprise would do, and it's a cinch that even if they did have some drums of gas sitting around, we couldn't tank up under fire."

Dibble, admitting the point, turned to Ahmat and spoke very rapidly in Malay. The skipper answered both him and Carson by saying, "There is a cove on the opposite side of Pulau Panjang, almost in line with the tin mines. The fishing is not good there, so no one lives along the shore."

"Good!" And Carson, hauling for the island which Jamil had taken in the Nationalist name, only to surrender it to impostors, shaped his plans.

CHAPTER VI

PIRATES AND FOOLS

WITH the PT hidden in a tidal inlet, Carson spent the following day in picking his way along the game trails which snaked along Pulau Panjang's low and rocky hills. From the spine of the island, he looked down on the tin diggings. With glasses, he could see that among those along the riverfront were men in uniform. Two motorboats flying the Nationalist flag were moored at the piers nearest the Government House. There were gas drums on the pier.

Carson said to Ahmat, "Let's find some of the Chinese miners they ran out of town."

Dibble, who had come with the spying party, had a suggestion: "I say, now that we have those pirate rifles for our own men, we could give the Chinese *parangs* and knives. They'd be zealous allies." He chuckled. "Especially if we issued them a bite to eat. Though they've not starved, a Chinese could forage for roots, grubs, slugs and all that sort of thing. Amazing chaps, these Chinese."

Carson shook his head. "Reason I wanted to find some of them was to get an idea of how things were going in the village. They've probably been sneaking down to steal chickens and vegetables."

"Er—you know, with our Malays and those Chinese we could damn well take the village by surprise."

"That's out! I don't want a vestpocket war. The folks in the village were my friends until that tramp of a Jamil filled them up with patriotic and communist crap! Suppose things do finally clear up, could I come back, after shooting up the village?"

Dibble shrugged, and looked disgusted. When they returned to camp, he sent Ah Hing out to make contact with the Chinese miners.

Late that afternoon, Ah Hing returned with a ragged and emaciated survivor name Yut Li. Carson gave the old fellow rice and dried fish from the PT's pirate commissary.

"Two piecee boat come back last night," he began, and then Dibble's man translated, "He say, those fellow come back with plenty gas on deck. He not know how those Malay fellow like new government. Everybody work like hell all the time, nobody makes much tin."

When Yut Li went back with chow for his fellow refugees, Carson had not learned enough to help. He said to Ahmat, "I'll put on a turban and sarong and we'll slip into the village tonight. Steal a boat, and set the other one afire. That way, we'll have a clean getaway."

"In the dark, all look alike. What you say, it can be done."

Dibble, who had been pacing back and forth, muttering to himself, turned abruptly to face the group. "By God," he stormed, "positively nauseating, your attitude! No appreciation of my efforts at all!"

Cornelia, who had been sitting apart with Amai, asked, very sweetly, "What efforts, Mr. Dibble?"

"Eh? What's what? What efforts, indeed! Er—dash it all, I forgot to tell you. The truth is, you had sufficient fuel to get

to Singapore, so I made the most of my chance to dispose of it."

Carson got up. "What was that?"

Dibble chuckled. "While you were getting much needed sleep, I ran all three engines. Though only one was actually propelling that cockle shell, all three ate the most amazing quantities of fuel. Ahmat didn't realize what was up, as the speed was quite normal."

"Do you mean you put us on the beach? For two cents—" Carson's gesture meant, "I'd empty this pistol into your guts!"

Dibble wasn't a bit alarmed. "Please don't shout. You're a plucky chap, but frightfully devoid of judgment. When you're finally through frittering away your time, you'll have lost every shred of right to your tin diggings. So, I took the bull by the horns, as it were. Now, up and at them, assert your rights. Needn't have a war, merely muster Ahmat's men, muster those Chinese beggars, march out with confidence—damn it, man, you simply don't understand the native mind, there'd not be a shot fired!"

"You old fool!" Cornelia cried. "You—"

"My dear, I'm risking far more than Carson."

"Oh, you are?"

"Of course I am. You're not his wife. Whereas, I am exposing my one and only wife to what is admittedly a hazard." He glanced at Amai; she smiled openly, and approvingly, without words saying, "Now, *this* is a man!"

Cornelia snuggled up against Carson, and succeeded in choking back tears of despair and fury. Dibble turned away from the group, saying, "You American chaps are utterly incomprehensible!"

With noble resignation, Eustace Dibble sat down to toy with the lance he had brought with him. Presently he said to Ah Hing, "I noticed the spoor of horses this afternoon. Timorese ponies, doubtless, gone more or less wild. If your countrymen haven't eaten the best ones, I might do a bit of tent pegging. Go find me one."

"Can do," Ah Hing said, and made for the trail which Yut Li had taken.

Later, Cornelia and Carson, still wide-eyed from incredulity, watched the one-time captain of lancers trying to convince a shaggy pony not much bigger than a St. Bernard dog that it was destined for war-like games and amusements. Ah Hing was busy cutting tent pegs with a *parang*.

Carson stroked Cornelia's hair and muttered, "Darling, we'll soon be as crazy as he is, and then we'll all have a good time, don't worry."

"But you and Ahmat could be killed—oh, Lord, he arranged it! I'll—I'll—"

He caught her hand, and took the pistol she had snatched.

"He'd give you a superior look, and tell you you mustn't waste His Majesty's ammunition. And you couldn't shoot the old devil!"

"I suppose not," she admitted, sadly.

Carson glanced at the lengthening shadows. "It gets monotonous, but once more, I'm stealing a PT boat."

Dibble came to them, flourishing his lance. "I say, Carson, count me in on this. I must insist on sharing the risk."

"Go jump in the lake!"

"Er—I loathe swimming. D'you know, something occurred to me this very moment."

"Something always does!"

"That splendid old chap, the ex-*penghulu*, the mayor, as it were, the one they jailed. We'd be putting him in jeopardy, the pirates'd undoubtedly consider him responsible. Suppose I break into the so-called Government House—while you're creating a distraction, taking one PT boat, and riddling the other with tracer bullets to set her afire, I can liberate the old chap."

"O.K., but we'll do it my way. Let's get going."

Cornelia caught Carson with both arms and held him until he got breath enough to say, "Try that again when I come back, we'll have more time, and less audience!"

THE sun was low when Carson's roundabout march brought him and Ahmat's crew into the swampy area which faced the ruined fortress; the tides rather than strategy dictated the hour. He had insisted that Dibble and Ahmat cover the riverfront. Dibble, he had reasoned, would have less time for fantastic improvisations.

As they lurked, Carson's men watched helmeted and rifle-armed "Nationalists" going into and coming from the ruined fort. Anxiously, he saw the shadow of the

One of Carson's lookouts called from a tree-top, "The furnaces are going."

headland move slantingly across the lower reaches of the river, bringing early dusk into the swamp, and twilight to the diggings. One of his lookouts called from a tree-top, "The furnaces are going. Men still carry ore to the sluices."

"What else?"

"Five-six with guns and bayonets stand around."

"Just that many less in the fort."

Then came the drumming of engines. Dibble wasn't sparing what little fuel remained. Two men in uniform popped up from the crumbling parapet of the fort. Several Nationalists ran from the diggings toward the pier. Behind Carson, a rifle whacked. One of the pirates toppled from the parapet.

"You damn idiot!" Carson shouted, but no one heard him, for the roar of engines filled the air.

Dibble cut the power. The PT swung in a sharp turn. Then, nearly abeam of the two in mooring, he opened up with the .50 caliber machine guns. Tracers riddled the plywood hulls. Flame and black smoke rose.

Carson got only a glimpse of this. With a yell, he plunged from cover. On both sides of him, Arisakas crackled. Bullets enfiladed the bamboo bridge. They zinged from the masonry. For a moment, the Nationalists returned the fire. The sound of it was swallowed by the *pop-pop-pop* of the burning bamboo pier. The machine gun stutter stopped, but Carson was now too close to his objective to wonder why.

He plunged into the shadowed sallyport, where he saw Captain Kolopakeng, trying to rally the surprised pirates around him. *Parange* flashed. Bayonets twinkled. Carson's pistol jammed. He hurled the weapon at Kolopakeng, catching him squarely in the face. The man staggered. A rifle butt flattened him. Then, as the raiders spread out, they shoved fresh clips into place, and sprayed the area with lead.

They chased the defenders down the vaulted passageways. Some they cut down. Others, flinging empty rifles aside, dove through gun embrasures and into the moat. Carson yelled, "This way! Turn Haji loose! Let 'em go, turn Haji loose!"

The blade of a *parang* pried the cell door open.

"Get going, Haji!" Then, by what little light was reflected from the opposite wall, he saw that the old man had a fellow in captivity. "Who's that?"

Haji answered, "Jamil," and Carson recognized the little man who had started social reorganization.

"Jamil! Behave, and you may live through this. Or do you want to be shot while escaping?"

Jamil didn't answer. He raised his hands.

AS PLANNED, Carson met his men in the area. "Grab this fellow," he said, prodding Captain Kolopakeng with his toe, "and bring him along."

The shooting had stopped. Two blaz-

ing motorboats lighted the riverfront. The third had its nose rammed into the bank. Ahmat was at the starboard guns. He yelled and waved when Carson's group crossed the drawbridge to skirt the moat. The only Nationalists in sight were sprawled along the riverfront. They lay two and three in a heap.

Carson and Haji Musa, well ahead of the raiding part, went toward the diggings. The houses along the river would certainly be deserted. Haji called, "The peace upon you, and the mercy of Allah, and His blessing!"

There was no answer, no sign of the villagers. He went further inland, to repeat the call. Finally, from behind them, came several women whose dripping garments indicated that they had ducked into the river for safety. Carson said, "Find your men and say that all is well. We have Jamil and we have Captain Kolopakeng. Those who got away, they do not count! But first, bring us two skirts and two jackets like you're wearing."

"Skirts and jackets, *tuan?*" the foremost woman echoed.

"Aywah," the liberated headman answered. "Do what he says." A sly grin appeared on his wrinkled face.

They obeyed. Then they went to take the news to those hiding in the jungle's fringe. Carson said to the *serang,* "Tell Ahmat and *Tuan* Dibble to come ashore. Those machine guns worry them!"

He turned to those who had the two prisoners: "Hobble their ankles. Strip them and dress them in women's clothes. Then whip them through the diggings, that'll convince the doubters!"

He was right. Nationalist and pseudo-Nationalist had not been flogged more than halfway through the diggings when several villager elders came from cover to hail Haji and Carson.

"We have been fools and the sons of fools," they said. "He spoke large words, but paid us nothing. If that is the way of a Republic, peace upon Soekarno, and let him stay far from us."

"Jamil had a head stuffed with books," Carson said. "But the others, they were pirates."

"Maybe that is why he was locked up, so he couldn't tell us what he learned about them," one of the eld rs said. "But still we want no more of his way."

Nationalist and pseudo-Nationalist were flogged through the diggings.

"You'll work for me again?"

"Aywah," they answered.

"And let the Chinese miners come back?"

"Aywah! Ony a fool would tend furnaces. Let the Chinese do it, and with our blessing. Now with your permission, we go to throw a few rocks at Jamil and Kolopakeng."

The crowd which had gathered followed the elders to overtake the hobbled agitators. Ahmat said, "Praise Allah, it is good to be home!"

And Haji said, "Praise Allah, it is good that my people have come to their senses."

The *serang* had by now returned from the PT boat. *"Tuan* Dibble," he reported, "is badly cut up. They rushed the boat when he nosed her into the bank, and the machine gun jammed."

Carson found Dibble stretched on deck, with Ahmat kneeling beside him. The big Englishman was blood soaked from head to foot. He wheezed. A red froth drooled from the corners of his mouth.

"Don't bother, don't bother!" he protested. "Tell me what happened."

"But we've got to take care of you."

"Ahmat's done well enough, temporarily. If you don't mind, I'd rather you let my wife tend to these scratches. How'd everything turn out?"

"Everything—" Carson began, and stopped short.

Dibble still breathed, but it wouldn't be for long. Carson looked at the gas gauge. "Let's go, Ahmat. Don't tell me the tide's not right—we've got to get him back to his wife before she's his widow."

He revved up the engines.

When Carson and Ahmat got the wounded man ashore, Dibble refused to let anyone but Amai touch him. Cornelia said, between sobs, "I thought—I hated—the old devil—but—oh, darling, I'm so glad you came through, I was frantic—"

"Some of Ahmat's men are beyond any doctoring. I thought I had given Dibble the safest end of it."

"Ahmat's men were fighting to win back their old home; he was—well, just being whimsical. Do you think there's really not a chance?"

"He looked as though he'd gone through a meat grinder. Nothing Amai can do except sit there and wait."

Cornelia got up. Carson caught her hand. "We couldn't do any good."

Presently Amai came from the brush shelter. She said, "His head is clear; he wants to see you both, while there is time."

BY FIRELIGHT, Carson saw that Amai had done a neat job of bandaging. He and Cornelia knelt on the ground beside him.

"Everything—in hand—brilliant idea—" Dibble coughed, choked. "Dressing those-chaps—in women's clothes—couldn't've done better—myself. They've lost face—so have those Nationalist scoundrels—we need chaps like you—takes white men—to run things—"

His eyes closed. His breathing was hardly perceptible. Carson took Cornelia's hand, and glanced at Amai. The Malay woman gestured for him to stay where he was.

Moments later, when the silence had become unbearable, Dibble opened his eyes. His voice was steadier when he said, "I'm still a magistrate. Will be, for some minutes. Been a magistrate for years. Dealt minor justice. But never officiated at a marriage. These Moslem beggars have their own ways. Amai, get Ah Hing and Ahmat as witnesses. Carson—Cornelia—join hands—I'll get my breath presently—"

His chin slumped to his chest. His hands made clawing motions.

Cornelia whispered to Carson, "We can't balk this time."

He answered, "I don't want to."

The wounded man roused himself a little when the witnesses arrived. Amai gave Carson a ring.

Dibble recited the ceremony in Dutch, and so hastily that Carson couldn't follow it; he responded to Cornelia's nudges, though Dibble didn't wait for answers. A moment of silence, dazed silence.

The Dibble said in a strong voice, "Don't gape like an idiot! If you don't kiss the bride, I shall!"

He got up, quickly and easily, catching her by the elbows and fairly lifting her to her feet. "Amai," he commanded, "get that champagne, I trust it's cool enough to open!" Then, to the gaping couple, "Oh, I'm wounded, no doubt at all. But not seriously enough to keep me from—er, exaggerating slightly, and chewing some betel to—er, simulate gory froth."

"You—brought—champagne?" Cornelia finally demanded.

"Knew I'd get you two married off. I feel more like a magistrate now." He rubbed his hands together, briskly. "If you still insist, young lady, the next *prahu* loaded with tin will take you to Singapore. And then the States."

Cornelia answered, brightly, "You've simplified things for us, ever so much, marrying us under false pretenses. Now I can get an annulment in the States; it'll be lots less embarrassing than if I had to sue him for desertion because he missed the boat in Singapore."

"Oh, no, you don't!" Carson objected. "That'd be the same as claiming Mr. Dibble isn't an honest magistrate."

"But I have to go to Singapore—I need some clothes, I haven't a thing to wear."

Carson considered for a moment. "All right, I'll take you along, but it's going to be just like my escape to Palembang—a detour back to the mines."

Dibble, in no wise hampered by his wounds, had stalked after Amai to help her find the wine. Cornelia glanced in their direction for a moment, and then came close to Carson. "I do believe you mean it," she finally said. "But that old devil did trick us . . . No, I won't—"

"You will! It's legal, and do I have to twist your arm?"

"Just one tiny twist, darling . . ."

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOSEPH A. FARREN

SOME of the other newspapers made quite a joke of it, the time Meredith Miller and I turned up at that locksmith's at four o'clock in the morning with rings in our noses. There had been a Halloween mask ball that night in Town Hall and the papers assumed we'd gone there dressed as Zulu warriors and that the rings were part of our costumes. They said that when the party broke up we couldn't get the rings loose and had to have the locksmith pry them off. And they hinted we'd had a pretty moist evening.

A "Blue Pencil Club" Story

By FRANKLIN GREGORY

I knew only that somehow I seemed to be down on my hands and knees.

Naturally, Meredith and I resented those stories. We took a lot of ribbing from the gang at the Blue Pencil Club. And it was pretty bad when our own paper, the *Herald,* fired Meredith for being absent with out leave for a month and docked me for muffing an assignment.

I felt sorry for Meredith. He was our drama critic and, as I saw it, he was the victim of an occupational hazard. It seemed to me that even the editors of the *Herald* should have seen something queer was going on because those two New York critics, Phalen and Stark, had disappeared just a few months before Meredith did.

Our trouble was that we weren't able to explain at the time. But now that Kitty O'Mara, the musical comedy star, has retired from the stage and sold her Bucks County farm and gone to the Riviera to live, I don't see any harm in telling exactly what happened.

Right at the start I want to make one thing clear. Those rings were solid iron. Doesn't it stand to reason that if we'd hooked them on ourselves for a gag, we'd have used something easier to get off?

MEREDITH, who was as easy-going as he was fat, disappeared on a Sunday, six days after our club threw its last big brawl. It's a newspaperman's club, you know, and every so often we honor some celebrity with a party. At this particular blowout, on Monday night, September 30th, the guest of honor was Miss O'Mara. And the occasion was the try-out opening at the Shubert Theater here in Philly of her new musical, "Manhattan Minx," which meant that the party didn't start until around midnight after the show.

At that, I was working on the late trick at the *Herald,* and by the time I turned up at the club, Miss O'Mara had come and gone. Still, a lot of the boys were sitting around, chewing the fat and holding a general post-mortem.

Meredith, who had also been late for the party because he had to write his review, was sitting at a table with a couple of critics who had come down from New York to give the play the onceover. After I picked up a drink at the bar, I sat down with them.

Meredith was saying, "Still, what else could I do but pan her? Her singing lacked expression, and I never saw such wooden acting in my life."

He had a proof of his review in front of him, and I glanced at it and so did the two New York men, Lorimer Lane of the *Herald-Trib* and Edwin Castle of the *Mirror.* The last line read: *Miss O'Mara recently purchased a farm in Bucks County. Would it be unkind to suggest that she plant her corn there?*

I chuckled. But Lane and Castle gave each other a curious look. Castle said, "Well—I don't know. The show itself's not so bad."

"No," Meredith conceded. "The show's not bad at all. But a critic of any integrity can't let an actress get away with a lousy performance like that. What else could you do?"

Lorimer Lane sucked his thumb thoughtfully.

"You could ignore the acting," he said. "That's what I did."

"And her singing?" asked Meredith.

"And her singing," Lane said. Castle nodded agreement.

Meredith frowned into his glass of Bass's Ale. He moved his bulky body into a more comfortable position.

"I don't get it," he said. "That looks to me like you're guilty of intellectual dishonesty. What's a critic for if not to criticize?"

Again Lorimer Lane and Ed Castle exchanged curious glances. Finally, Castle said with an effort, "Do you remember those two fellows who disappeared last spring at about the same time? Frank Phalen of the *Sun* and Wendell Stark of the *World-Telly?* They'd been panning her for months."

I sat up at that. Meredith paused midway in lighting his pipe, and looked sharply at Castle.

"You aren't trying to tell me that Kitty O'Mara had anything to do with that!" he exploded. "What rot!"

Castle shrugged. Meredith snorted. "It was pure coincidence, of course!"

Lorimer Lane fingered his glass.

"I don't know," he said. He twisted the glass back and forth. "You can't prove anything, we know that. But ever since it happened all the New York boys have tried to disregard her. There's a feeling . . ."

His voice trailed off.

For my part, I merely put the suggested reason for the double disappearance down to the fact that Castle and Lane had had a couple of drinks too many. Fellows sometimes get screwy ideas along about three o'clock in the morning, especially in the Blue Pencil Club where the drinks are bigger and the atmosphere is a bit different from most places. I don't quite know how to explain it, but newspapermen who work under pressure to meet the deadlines at night aren't always quite in gear with the calm, orderly, daytime people they write about. They focus their attention on the same objects as daytime folks, but they don't always see the same things in the same way. Maybe there isn't enough light.

So you see why I felt the way I did about these New York lads, Lane and Castle. Meredith was saying, "But you know, even though I had to pan Miss O'Mara's performance tonight, I had the feeling—sitting there in the theater—that she could be a truly great actress and singer. There were moments when I felt that she was holding herself in on purpose."

"You felt that?" Ed Castle asked eagerly.

"As if," Meredith continued, "she feared that if she let herself go, she'd have that audience eating out of her hand. As if she were an enchantress withholding her great powers for fear of the havoc she might create."

Lane and Castle were paying the strictest attention. Now Lane said quietly, "Others have felt that, Meredith."

That was the end of the discussion about Kitty O'Mara and the two missing critics. But one thing always leads to another, and after Joe, the steward, set up our outsize drinks again, Meredith said, "Have you ever wondered just how good the great singers of the past really were, before the phonograph came along to immortalize the voice? What do we really know about the quality of Jenny Lind's singing of Mozart's 'L'ameró' except what her contemporaries wrote? How can we really know that Caffarelli, away back there in the Eighteenth Century, was unaproachable in beauty of voice, or that his contemporary, Farinelli, was the most remarkable singer who ever lived?"

Ed Castle smiled.

"Or what do we know of the Lorelei?" he asked.

"Or of the Sirens of Greek Mythology," Lane added.

"Or of Circe," Meredith agreed, "the enchantress of the Isle of Aeaea, whose song lured the men of Ulysses into her palace where she changed them into swine. Do you remember Andrew Lang's sonnet?

> "As one that for a weary space has lain
> Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine—"

There was a thoughtful silence. Then Castle heaved a heavy sigh. "Good Lord! What sort of singing could it be to lure men to their doom?"

Somebody looked at his watch. It was almost four, and the party broke up. And, as I said, it was six days later that Meredith dropped from sight.

MEREDITH MILLER'S disappearance caused a sensation around the office. In over twenty years in the business he'd never missed a day and had never been late. He was married, he had two children, he wasn't known to play around with other women, and his only vices were addiction to the theater, his English pipe and English ale.

He was an interesting companion, a good conversationalist, and an all-around nice fellow in his private life. And it was silly to think that anyone would want to harm him. And yet, on Sunday, the sixth day of October, he simply disappeared from the view of his friends.

Naturally, I recalled with some uneasiness the conversation we'd had with Ed Castle and Lorimer Lane. And also, quite naturally, I didn't breathe a word of it around the office. It seemed too ridiculous.

I was still trying to dope the thing out a couple of weeks later when the city editor called me up to his desk.

"Larry," he said, "get out your manure spreader. You're the farm editor."

I opened my mouth.

"Kent's folded up at Lancaster," the c.e. explained. "Go up and take over."

Now, Lee Kent edited our farm page, and what the c.e. meant was that he'd gotten sick or tossed off too many martinis or got gored by a bull or something of the kind, and that I had to go up to Lancaster in the Amish country and pinch-hit for him in covering the annual show of the

Keystone Livestock Growers' Association.

I'd never seen a big livestock show before and, brother, it was really something: concessions, tents, carnival midway, farm implement displays, trotting races, vaudeville acts at night. But the main feature was the row on row of long, one-story frame barns with their livestock, and the big, central building with the sawdust-covered arena where the judging took place.

The judging had been going on all week and when I arrived the grand champions were being announced.

I'm a city slicker myself and the only animals I ever saw before were in the Zoo. So I got kind of a bang out of it for a while, wandering through the barns—what with the stallions and the mares acting up, the dairy cattle lowing and flicking flies off their rumps, and the ewe lambs going ma-a-a-h.

And pigs! I never knew there were so many pigs in the world. Hundreds of 'em in their straw-filled pens, grunting and squealing and nuzzling each other and biting each other and drooling from their flat snouts. And all the signs on their pens with the breeders making their outlandish claims, like—

"Yorkshires—the Ham, Loin and Bacon Breed, Big Litters, Easy Feeders!"

Or—

"Chester White—The Swine of the Highest Blood Lines; Unexcelled in Prolificness."

And there were Poland Chinas and Duroc Jerseys and Bershires and Hampshires, and Lord knows what all. And some of them had fancy monickers like "Packer King" and "Swift's Pride" and "Harvester Fashion." And just about every pen sported gaudy purple and red and white premium ribbons which the pigs had won at one fair or another.

I don't know how anybody could love a pig. And yet, as I was walking along one aisle, a pretty little blue-eyed girl who was holding onto her father's hand exclaimed, "Aren't they just too sweet, papa? I wish I had one."

Well, all I can say is that everybody has his own taste. Me, I couldn't even stand the barnyard smell. And I knew I'd be darn glad to get back to my air-conditioned hotel room and get a bath outside of me and a rye highball in.

As a matter of fact, I was just about ready to do that very thing. And I was hurrying back through one of the hog barns to the press room after getting a late flash from the judges on the winner of Class 2 (sow and litter) when I noticed an exhibitor's sign. It read:

Sedgley Farm
Kitty O'Mara, Prop.

I stopped. So Kitty O'Mara raised show hogs, huh? She would! She was one of these amateur farmerettes, you see, and mighty proud of her hobby. You know the type—they don't care how much dough they toss away on their "farming" so long as they win some ribbons at a fair. I looked into her pens.

She had maybe a dozen entries—sows and boars and barrows. But even a city lad like me could tell there wasn't a good pork chop in the bunch. They were scrawny, angular red Durocs with rough coats and dry skins, a sure sign, the County Farm Agent told me, of wrong feeding. And there were two or three sorry-looking gilts and a scruffy bulldozer with too much head and jowl.

How she got such a mess past the Admissions Committee was beyond me, until I remembered that any sort of a show needs a big name for window-dressing.

I guess my disgust must have registered in my face, because a familiar voice beside me said, "In fact, it's a typical O'Mara turkey, eh, Larry?"

I grinned, and turned to see who was speaking. But there wasn't anybody there. I looked behind me, and there wasn't anybody there, either. In fact, there wasn't a soul in sight along the full length of the barn.

"Yes, sir, what a floperoo!" the voice chuckled. "Believe me, I'd like the job of writing this bust up!"

SOMETHING ran down my spine that felt like a wet snake. It was Meredith's voice—but where was Meredith? I stared. And he must have seen my bewilderment, for he said, "I'm over here, Larry."

I realized with a shock that the voice came from one of the pens.

"Here!" he said again as I turned around. As far as I could figure out, the

voice came from a huge boar with plump, meaty hams and thick, full loins. Over the pen hung a white ribbon that read: *Aged Boar, 3d Premium.*

"And I'm the only one of her herd that even placed," Meredith giggled.

I started to shake all over. Meredith said, " 'Aged!' Hmph! I'm not yet 45!"

"You damned liar," I said, "you're pushing fifty."

I said it without thinking. And then, because I'd said it, you see, I had to believe.

I bit my lip. It was a long time before I could speak again. My very insides were hopping around.

"What happened?" I was able to falter at last.

Meredith shook his huge head in an effort to shake his floppy ears out of his eyes. That was when I really recognized him. By his brown eyes. The eyes of genuine pigs, you know, are blue-green.

"She invited me up to Sedgley to talk over my criticism of her show," he said simply. "Like a idiot, I went."

I started to say something, but Meredith continued, "I was right, anyhow. Remember how I said she always seemed to hold herself back? Remember how we talked about Circe? Well—she didn't sing for me, she didn't give me wine, but . . . she has the gift."

For a moment I was too horrified to say anything. Then I glanced at the other pens.

"How about these others?"

"Just pigs, I guess. Phalen and Stark were left back at the farm. Couple of stuffed shirts who keep pretty much to themselves, and I don't give a damn about 'em. What I do give a damn about is to get out of this jam."

I could see the sense in that.

"It really wouldn't be so bad," he said, "if they treated you halfway decent. But —do you know what they did? They gave me the double hog cholera vaccination before they even brought me into this barn! It hurt like hell."

"This is beastly!" I cried. "What can we do?"

Meredith wrinkled his moist snout. It had an iron ring through the nostrils, to

Compare before you buy!
Only BIG YANK Work Shirts
Give You All These Extra Advantages!
✓ Danger-Check Safety Cuffs*
✓ Elbow-Action Sleeves*
✓ Sanforized (shrinkage less than 1%)
✓ Dress Shirt Styling
✓ Wet-Resistant Cigarette Pocket*
✓ Reliance Strainproof Yoke*
✓ Full-Cut Roominess
✓ Non-Rip Seams
✓ Non-Jab Pencil Pocket
*Patented
NOW!—For first time in 5 years—blue chambray shirts and gray covert pants as well as the ever-popular twills, jeans and drills in your favorite colors.
BIG YANK
SHIRTS
PANTS
RELIANCE MANUFACTURING CO., CHICAGO 6
AT GOOD STORES EVERYWHERE

keep him—as I learned later—from rooting up Kitty O'Mara's fine, green pasture.

"I've given the matter a lot of thought, of course," he replied. "Do you remember that fairy story, 'Beauty and the Beast?' Where the wicked enchantress changed the handsome prince into a monster? Well, it took a beautiful maiden to fall in love with him in his beast's form before the spell was broken. But—can you imagine a beautiful maiden falling for me?"

"No," I said honestly, "I can't."

I had a passing recollection of the pretty little girl I'd seen a few hours earlier, the one who'd thought the pig was just too sweet. And I was playing around with that idea when I got my inspiration. I whipped out the show handbook and turned to: *Department 3A—Swine—Entry Rules.*

"Listen!" I said. And I started reading the rules excitedly to Meredith.

" 'Number 5—All animals must be pure bred.' Meredith, are you pure bred? You are not!

" 'Number 6—All animals must be owned by the exhibitor sixty days prior to this meeting?' Were you owned by Kitty O'Mara sixty days before the show? You were not.

" 'Number 9—Any willful misstatement of exhibitor as to age or fraudulent entry of any animal will cause permanent disqualification of exhibitor . . .'

"Meredith, we've got her over a barrel!"

"I don't see it," Meredith said grumpily.

"Look!" I shouted. "Every one of these exhibitors is proud as all get-out of both his livestock and his reputation. Can you imagine Kitty's embarrassment if we got her disqualified?"

I started to hurry away. But Meredith called me back.

What are you going to do?"

"Simply tell her," I replied, "that if she doesn't change you back into human form, I'll expose her."

I started away again. Meredith called: "But, wait, Larry. Don't you see . . . ?"

I didn't turn back that time. I was too enthused with my swell idea.

KITTY O'MARA'S farm on the Delaware River in Bucks County was a humdinger. And brother, so was Kitty O'Mara herself. She had lines like a Rolls-Royce and more curves than a roller coaster. Her hair was jet, and it was combed straight back from her forehead; her eyes were violent and they had that come-hither look, and she had a big Irish trap that spelled nothing short of osculation.

She received me in the large library, wearing a mite of a dress, dark and diaphanous. And when she moved into the light that slanted through the high French window, the glimpse I got of her figure took my breath away.

I hadn't counted on this, and took a while to get my bearings. And while I was getting them, I fixed my attention on the curious, old-fashioned beaded portiere that hung across the window. They were colored beads, strung on coarse thread, hanging in ropes from a rod. And what struck me was that some of the ropes were tied into knots. I was in the Navy during the war, and I know something about knots, but I'd never seen the like of these.

Somehow, I must have managed to stammer out my message. For she stood a moment by the French window, perfectly poised, one hand toying with a rope of the portiere. If it came as a shock to her that I'd learned the secret of how she used her unusual gift, she never showed it.

"And you would really expose me?" she asked finally.

There was a doleful note in her musical voice that made me feel like a heel, even through reason told me she was in the wrong. I took the show handbook out of my pocket and turned to the rules page. The very feel of the handbook served to steady me.

"Unless you release Meredith," I said.

She regarded me for a long moment with those deep violet eyes; and man, I simply swam in them.

"I . . . couldn't persuade you . . . not to?"

There was a coaxing in her voice that was difficult to ignore. There was a wistful smile on her full, red lips that suggested other and happier worlds. I told myself I was a damn fool. I asked myself, What did Meredith Miller mean to me? I thought, Isn't the whole thing a crazy dream and won't I find Meredith busily at work when I get back to the *Herald*?

But when I felt the pressure of my fingers around the handbook, I shook myself. And with what courage I could mus-

ter, though my voice was husky, I replied, "I don't see how."

Miss O'Mara sighed. It was a stage sigh, quite audible, and I daresay quite artificial.

"I'm really very sorry," she said tonelessly. "You seemed such a nice young man."

I just had time to note the curious use of the past tense when several things happened at once. Kitty O'Mara's fingers deftly twisted the portiere's beaded rope. Her eyes became hard, her lips muttered, and the floor leaped up and nearly socked me in the chin. I was too confused to realize what was going on. I knew only that somehow I seemed to be down on my hands and knees. I started to get up, and couldn't. My head felt heavy; my whole body seemed weighted. Miss O'Mara was standing over me, her lip curled in contempt as she recited in sort of a sing-song:

"Only a maiden, fair and kind,
Can this witch's spell unbind."

Even then I didn't get it. But when I glanced toward a long mirror that reached to the floor, I gasped. For the same horrible thing that had happened to Meredith had happened to me.

"Look!" I shouted. "Look, Miss O'Mara. This isn't any way to treat a visitor."

But she had turned her head and was calling through the open French window to a man in blue overalls who was crossing the lawn: "Josh! One of your pigs got out of the pen somehow and he's in here. Come take him away."

And before I could collect my wits, the man, Josh, was behind me with a strong stick and beating me toward the outside. It was hard to walk, I was that heavy. And I couldn't see where I was going because there was something hanging in my eyes—my flapping ears.

It is a most unusual feeling to become a pig. You keep trying to walk upright at first, and you can't make it. I guess Josh had quite a time with me. When I reached the French window a thought struck me and I looked up. I saw the knot she'd made. A weird knot it was, part cat's paw, part shroud knot, and yet, somehow darkly suggestive of a hangman's noose.

I shuddered. For I realized what all these knots were: they were the infernal hag-knots, from time immemorial used in witchcraft to bind a spell.

IT IS only with a great effort that I can remember coherently the next few days. There was the pain of having a ring fastened in my nose. There were cold, rainy nights. There was the mud and muck and filth of the sties. There were the irregular feedings of garbage; for Kitty O'Mara, I quickly learned, no more believed in scientific feeding for the general run of her livestock than she believed in sanitation.

"In fact," Meredith told me when he was brought back from the show, "she's a damn poor farmer. Now if she'd provide colony houses and hog pastures and self-feeders, she could make some money at it."

There was some balm for me in the fact of Meredith's return, if only because misery loves company. He'd known this would happen, he said, and it was why he tried to call me back. But I was pig-headed, he said, and now we were both in the soup.

We spent most of our time together, talking and eating. He viewed our situation with a certain wry humor.

"So many people think of critics as swine anyway," he said. "And it's a nice vacation in a way—plenty of fresh country air. But I do miss my pipe and my ale." He added, as an afterthought, "I've heard she may put me to stud."

I was horrified at that. But I was utterly shaken when he told me that Phalen and Stark, the New York critics, were kept in a separate pen where they were being finished off.

"Finished off?" I asked.

"For the packer," Meredith explained. "As a general thing, the lovely Kitty doesn't give a hang about diet. But for a few days before shipping, this fellow, Josh, gives 'em a special fattening diet of soybean oil meal, corn and wheat."

After that, I tell you, life wasn't even tolerable. I had a job with a packer's once, and I'd seen pig stickers at work. I began having the most fearsome nightmares.

Then one day the hired man, Josh, came and drove most of us over to the other pen where Phalen and Stark were. And

sure enough, our feed was changed. I don't know how I survived those next few days. My appetite was gone; I spent sleepless nights of worry, and instead of getting fatter, I got thinner. Meredith worried over my condition.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, kid," he warned. "Try to eat something, anyway. You've got to live."

But I noticed that his own appetite had lost its keen edge.

It was about a week later that a truck arrived and loaded half a dozen porkers and took them away. And the next day the truck came back and took a few more. And the day after that, the same thing happened.

The mere sight of that truck made me a nervous wreck. Something had to be done, I knew—and yet I couldn't think of a single thing. And to make matters worse, Phalen and Stark, the only two others we recognized as human and who might have contributed to some organized plan, kept to themselves. I don't know whether it was typical New York snobbishness for the provincial Philadelphian, or what it was, but I do know they weren't a damn bit of help.

And then another load went out.

That night I had a horrible nightmare. I started fighting the pig sticker, and I apparently went into real action. For when I awoke, I had my teeth sunk in the haunch of the sow nearest me, and she was squealing her fool head off.

There was a restless movement and some fussing in the pen, and then things quieted down. But it gave me an idea. And without saying anything to Meredith, I went into action. I snapped at a big husky barrow; I bit a yearling sow in the shoulder; I kicked a gilt in the snout. And within three minutes I had the sweetest stampede going on in there that you ever saw: pigs fighting and biting, squealing and grunting until you'd have thought all hell broke loose.

Right at the height of the riot, I edged away toward the gate. And sure enough, just as I figured, I saw the hired man, Josh, coming down the lane from the outbuildings with a lantern to see what the trouble was.

I was in shadow when he unlatched the gate. And before he could swing it shut, I darted out between his legs, bowling him over and sending the lantern in a wide arc. It went out when it hit the ground—and man, did I beat feet! Behind me I could hear Josh cussing at the top of his lungs.

What I had in mind, of course, was to break into the big house and some way untie those hag-knots with my teeth. But I hadn't gone very far when I became lost. So I lay low in some bushes to wait for daylight.

When morning came, I found I was beside a narrow lane that led up to a little country school. That wasn't so good, I figured. But I was hungry, so I walked out into the open and began munching grass. And that's why I didn't notice at first the little girl walking up the lane toward the school, swinging her lunch bucket. When I glanced up, she was quite near.

She was a pretty little things, with blue eyes and blond curls. I had a feeling I'd seen her before somewhere. When she saw me, she stopped, and then walked up to me.

"Soo-ey," she said softly. "Soo-ey."

I backed away. The last thing on earth I wanted just then was to have attention called to me. Already, far down the lane, I could see other children coming along, and with them was their teacher.

"You're just the sweetest thing," the kid said, still advancing. That was when I remembered where I'd seen her before—at the Livestock Show. I glanced behind me, and found my escape cut off by a high embankment.

"Listen, little girl," I said, "go away."

Her eyes widened in delight.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "A talking pig! Why, you must be enchanted—like the one in my fairy book."

I began to sweat.

"Listen," I pleaded, "go away."

But before I could stop her, she had thrown her arms around me.

"I could just love you, you nice piggie you!" she cried out. And she kissed me right smack on the snout.

There was a flash of green light, the ground fell from under me, and I found myself standing erect with my two hind legs planted firmly on the ground. I started walking hastily away, but the kid tagged along.

"I just knew it," she laughed, clapping

her hands together. "I just knew you were a handsome prince!"

I started to run. She called after me, beseechingly, "Come back! Come back! It says in my fairy book you have to marry me—"

She was crying now. But I kept on running. Not that I wasn't grateful.

WHEN I reached the O'Mara farm, the truck was there again and they were already loading. My heart beat faster when I saw that Meredith was in the truck.

I didn't stop, but I went up to the big house and walked unannounced on Kitty O'Mara in her library. A glance in her mirror showed that I was quite a mess: my clothes were caked with mud from the pig sty, my face was filthy, and I still had that damned iron ring in my nose.

"You!" She stood up, frightened.

"Me!" I said savagely.

"But—" she faltered. She backed toward the curtain, and one hand began playing with a bead rope, and her lips moved.

"You damn fool," I said. "You can't work the same spell twice. Don't you know yet that the modern conception of magic is that a spell is merely a disease; that it builds up anti-bodies and gives immunity to a second attack?"

She stared at me, the pupils in those violet eyes wide.

"What are you going to do?"

"This," I said. And I grabbed her and dragged her to the sofa and threw her over my knees and spanked the living daylights out of her. Then I yanked her to her feet, pulled her to the portiere and forced her to untie the hag-knots—every dirty one of them.

When I reached the pens, I found half a dozen people I'd never seen in my life before scrambling over the fence and striking off in assorted directions. Meredith was climbing down from the truck.

"There go Phalen and Stark," Meredith said. "What happened?"

I explained as we walked down the road, away from Sedgley.

"She was just a spoiled brat," I concluded. "And I gave her a good hiding."

Meredith was thoughtful.

"You know," he said at last, "somehow I hate to leave. I sort of like farm life . . ."

We had a devil of a time getting back to Philadelphia. It was forty miles and because of our appearance nobody would give us a lift. And as I said, it was four o'clock the next morning before we reached town and woke up the locksmith and got the rings off.

The locksmith told the papers we had liquor on our breath. Well—I don't deny that we'd stopped at a tappie for a couple of beers.

It was unfair, of course, for the paper to fire Meredith. But he didn't seem to mind much. He had some money saved, and the last I saw of him he'd bought a little farm and was raising hogs for market.

"And doing quite well, too," he told me proudly. "Took three first prizes at the Livestock Show the other day. Of course, I've got an advantage over other farmers. I can see the pig's viewpoint."

I read in the papers that Phalen and Stark were back at work "after a protracted tour of Europe studying new trends in the drama."

I suppose they had to have some explanation for their absence. Can you imagine them telling just what happened to them and expecting to be believed? Can you imagine me?

SERVING IN PEACE AS IN WAR . . .

SUPPORT THE 1947 RED CROSS FUND

A "Caradosso" Story

By

F. R. BUCKLEY

OF

ILLUSTRATED BY
L. STERNE STEVENS

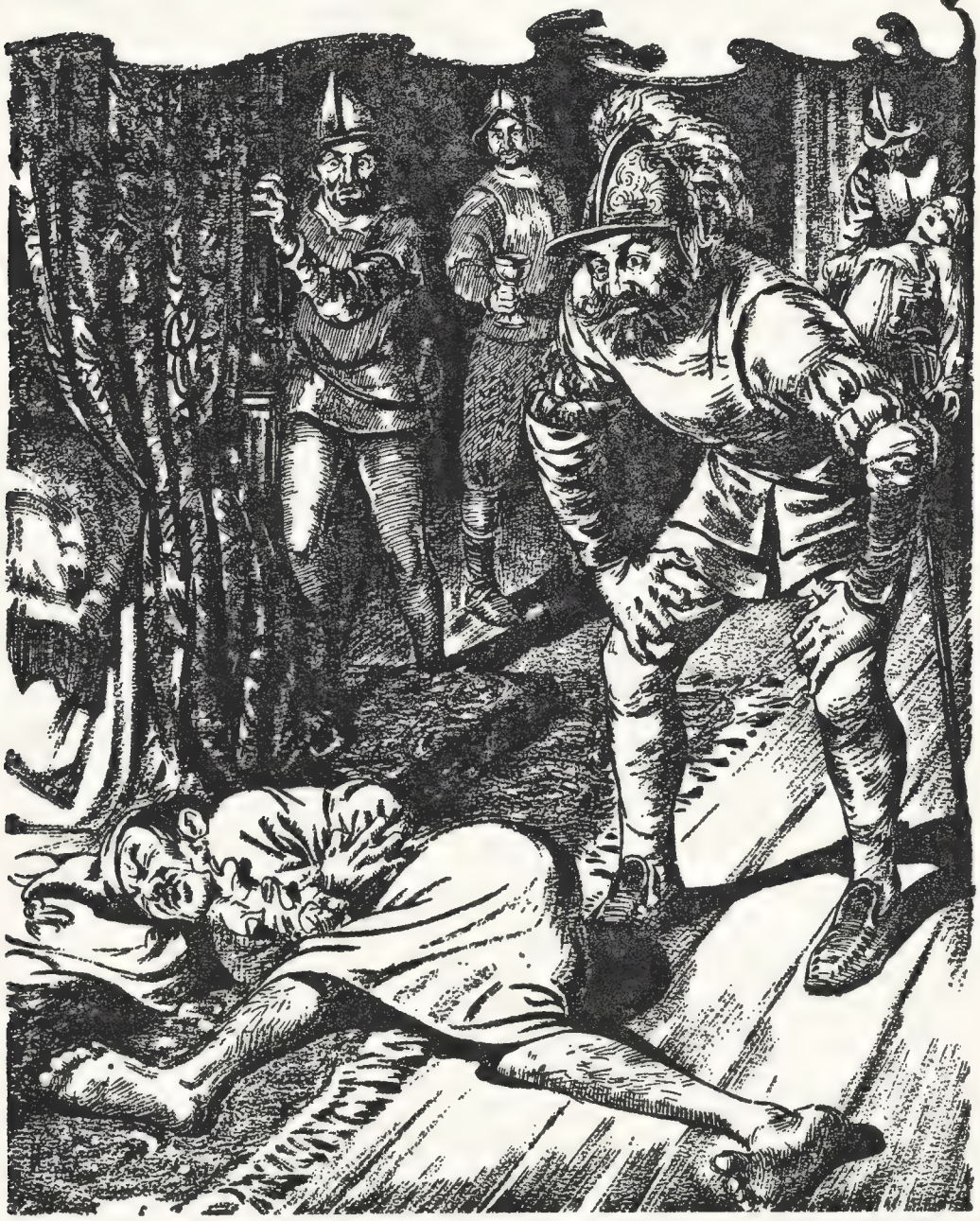
TO HIS SERENITY My Lord Duke Pietro IV of Rometia; from His Lordship's Ever-Obliged loving humble servant Luigi Caradosso, sometime Captain of the Guard; this iiij day of December 1580, these:

Sire;

It is a continual amazement to me how Doctors of no matter what persuasion (naturally I do not mean of religion, but of alchemy, astrology, medicine and such rubbishes) can from generation to generation prevail with God's other images; and not only with the majority of mankind (such as we make into soldiers) but also with nobles and gentry such as Your Highness' Grace, who can write their names and have letters left over and who therefore might be supposed to know better.

There lay Gianni di Castello Nero, writhing like a snake in a fish-net.

DEADLY WEAPONS



But during my nigh sixty years of service with Your Eminence's family I recall a succession of charlatans, each with a scheme or discovery that would not have deceived a child of five, and each entertained right royally until his pretensions came to naught. In the time of Your Grace's grandfather (in whose favor may God make an exception, Amen!) there was a fellow who could make gold. After him I remember a most reverend man who said tertian fever was caused by those stinging flies which arise from swamps at eventide; poor man, he proposed to drain all the marshlands of the duchy and of course died from inhaling the water-vapors—were our ancestors all fools to call this ague malaria, bad air, if it was caused by flies? Then came—or perhaps he had precedence, I forget—a medical lunatic who said the camp fever was caused by lice, which every soldier hath had about him since Caesar's time; *videlicet* myself, who have been scratching most of my days and still survive at fourscore years, to enjoy Your Serene Highness' generosity and bounty in this leaky hut.

I thought at first that the courier who came post-haste yesterday and trampled all over my turnips (but he will recover) was one charged by Your Highness to do something about the tiles of my roof; but no, he was to tell me that Your Highness hath found a man—another doctor, Heaven give me patience!—with a certain recipe for destroying whole armies, nay, whole cities, in the twinkling of an eye: thus causing wars to cease (with Your Excellency victorious) and the lion to lie down with the lamb, *etcetera etcetera.*

I WILL rehearse the facts laid before me in Your Lordship's gracious message; ofttimes words written or spoken in enthusiasm sound quite different when repeated coolly—as for instance the words of a lover, repeated to him later by the girl's father. Ha ha! This rogue doctor, then, approacheth Your Grace with the claim that gunpowder as we have known it is mere barley-flour, and that he hath, not one explosive, but *two,* of which either will devastate the earth; and which when used together—the one as it were setting off the other—will turn Italy into a howling desert, of which Your Eminence would presumably be King.

Leaving the desirability of such an empire to Your Lordship's judgment—it takes all kinds to make a world, mostly fools—let us consider what lies within my province as a soldier—the means by which it is to be achieved.

This doctor saith that one of his devastators is made from mercury, by his art transformed into a powder which blows up when stroked with a feather. Feathers in the artillery! But worse remains behind. This miracle, quotha, is not to be used alone, but as an encourager of another explodent which he hath concocted (he hath the sublime impudence to tell Your Serenity) out of acids and the juice of the bones of cows! In proof of these absurdities he produces his face, denuded of human features when his laboratory blew up; requesting Your Highness to build him another (laboratory, I mean, not face)—and pour the revenues of the Duchy into his project of winning future wars with soup!

Now I have stated the case in its true aspect, Your Grace will doubtless deem it so made as to be without parallel in past time. But while human wisdom flashes across the ages like shooting stars, human folly repeats itself as regularly as the sun rises. So I can tell Your Grace that this is not my first experience of invincible weapons; nay, in the year 1540 (I think it was) my life was made miserable for a time by just such another pretender—though to be sure he had the shame to wrap his method in mystery. He had not, God rest him, the brazenness to tell Gianni di Castello Nero that he could win wars with broth.

(The floor of this cottage hath become so uneven, from the roof-leaks, that my table joggleth whenever I dot an *i;* moreover there is no bedroom for the maid-servant, which entraineth regrettable results; but until the flood-waters rise to my neck or the parish priest excommunicate me, I continue; as becomes a recipient of Your Lordship's hospitality.)

I was then in the service of Your Grace's grandfather; the same who fixed the rate of my pension—in florins worth about three times what they are today. He had also assigned me, against the day of my retirement, a house with a whole roof; but

at the time of which I write some little pique had caused him to wish to hang me, so that I thought it prudent to go hide in a monastery. Your Grace may not be aware that though a man of war in later life, I was convent bred; having been left on the doorstep in a basket. I was indeed a sort of servant, and, as we say in the armies, mascot, to the monks until my eighteenth year; and learned much from them, not all of it entirely orthodox. The good brethren had (there were some such congregations in Italy at that time) their own special methods of dealing with the laity; to such an extent that, arriving to seek sanctuary these twenty-two years later, I found with regret that they had been degraded and dispersed by order of the Holy Father; and some of them including my especial friend the Hospitaller, more or less burned alive for heresy, poisoning and so on. Indeed, it appeared that in the legal sense they had never been monks at all, nor that a monastery; which makes it the more remarkable, as Your Highness will agree, that my moral life started under such auspices, should have been as pure as it hath.

But, denied the consolations of religion, I must still live; whereby it came about that a week later—after preliminary negotiations with which I will not weary Your Eminence—I walked into the guardroom of Castello Nero, slapped my sword-blade on the table and invited the lieutenant (who was sitting on a chair there, drinking wine out of a wooden mug) to get up and fight me in the courtyard.

"Hah?" says he, being drunker than an officer should be in mid-afternoon.

"Because," says I, "though unworthy, your eyes now behold the new captain of this guard, appointed over thy head by my lord Gianni. Thou'lt not relinquish promotion without ill-feeling—'tis not to be expected; on the other hand, good feeling and brotherly love are as necessary to me as sun and rain are to a violet. Wherefore, as I said, come forth into the courtyard and I will hew thee into mincemeat."

HE DID not even look up at me; sat there swashing the wine in his pot and shaking his head sadly from side to side.

"Spare thy sweat, Luigi Caradosso," he says into his beard (for I had given him my name, in a loud voice, on entering the room): "I'll not fight for command of *this* guard, at all events."

"No?" says I, somewhat surprised (but then I thought maybe the poor man had boils, or a wife, or some other hidden woe): "Then perhaps there is a sergeant who—"

"No sergeant would draw sword for command of this guard," says the lieutenant (his name was Bertelli), "nor no corporal. Nor no common soldier either. Nor the man who polisheth the equipment. Nor the boy who—"

What with wine and grief, he had embarked on a sort of litany that might go on forever. I therefore pushed his chair over backward, and when he had picked himself up off the floor inquired civilly the reason for these reluctances. Because (I said) it seemed to me a good enough guardship—a decent castle, defensible without too much effort; fair quarters for the officers and for the men lairs comfortable enough to keep them from giving trouble.

"Ah, true," says Bertelli, "but in a month or so there will be no guard at all. Right in the middle of the fighting season we shall be turned out, with devil a job going in the Free Companies, and—"

"Doth a noble giving up his guard," says I reasonably, "hire a new captain—and no cheap one, I may tell you?"

"That's because the people of this town are riotous," says Bertelli, still swashing his liquor and offering me none. "Once they're massacred—His Grace won't trust me to do it because I come from hereabouts—thou and the whole guard will be kicked out o' doors and this doctor will take our places. All of them."

"This doctor," says I, finding the wineskin in a corner and refreshing myself therefrom, "this doctor will replace one hundred and fifty armed men?"

"One hundred and eighty-three," says Bertelli sulkily. "Thou thyself hast replaced at least four around that wineskin."

"But whose wine is it?" I asked gently, laying my dagger conveniently on the table. "This doctor, you say, will replace the entire guard? Guns, too?"

"He hath a mode of warfare," says Bertelli, "which in the hands of one man

can destroy whole armies in the field, lay waste cities—"

Doth Your Grace detect some slight similarity between this proposal and the scheme of your doctor with the soup? Aha! We approach the meat of the matter—the soup meat, so to say. See how I can joke though up to the ankles in water!

"And the rioters with whom we're to deal before we are disbanded?" I broke in.

"They have got wind of this weapon," says the lieutenant, "and it would seem they have little taste for the same."

"But why?" I asked. "If one man's to win all the wars hereabout, will it not save their serving in the army?"

"Unfortunately," says Bertelli, "they were told that about gunpowder—or their grandsires were—and they found they still had to serve and that more of them got killed than ever. My own father could have no more children after me, all along of them guns."

"Artillery hath been at least of some benefit to the world, then," I told him, still hoping against hope for a fight. But it was evident that he (like Your Grace) believed in this irresistible weapon and so had lost all interest in the happier things of life.

"What's the population of the town?" I therefore asked him.

"About four thousand."

"And they will riot?"

"They're on the edge of revolt."

When a man changes "riot" into "revolt" it means he is in sympathy with the rioters.

"And His Lordship believes in this fairy-tale, this bogey-warfare?"

"If I had the money," says Bertelli, "that he hath given to that ape already—"

He babbled on while I reflected and finished the skin of wine. At last I arose, resumed my sword and dagger, pulled down my shirt and made myself decent.

"I will go," I told Bertelli, "and reason with His Lordship."

II

BUT there was no reasoning with him.

My Lord Gianni was one of those small men for whom no county, nor no duchy neither, can ever be large enough; he was, further, of a pindling and rickety constitution, with knock-knees. Nobles are not usually of attractive body—excepting always Your Grace's family by whose bounty I enjoy this Venetian mansion complete with lagoons; but this specimen, being wed to a lady much larger than himself, had thought to show his virility by growing on his upper lip a smudge as though he'd caught his nose on a candle. Naturally he esteemed himself qualified to be Emperor of the World.

Naturally, also, his wits outrunning his reason (as it can even in nobles of better construction), he believed utterly in the power of this Doctor Ignani to clear the way for him; without the expense and delay necessary to the raising and training of armies and the winning of wars. It was astonishing to hear him talk—to me of all people; telling me to my face that my function would be to butcher peasants, so that the survivors would pay taxes to make soldiering a thing of the past!

I pointed this out to him by a statement (quite untrue) that I had yearned to stay in his service for the term of my natural life; and his lordship was pleased to respond with a slight flush, a stutter and the lying promise that I and my myrmidons should not be dismissed, but retained to provide him with ceremonial guard on his excursions through his new dominions.

This to my very beard! As Your Grace doth not, of course, know, ceremonial duty is the loathing and dread of every guardsman—polished armor, every strap at the last hole, no wine, no scratching on duty, and no women without a lot of argument. A man would be better dead—that is to say, a *man;* but not being such, Gianni was offering this to me as the height of human happiness—after I should have quelled his riots for him.

Obviously it was of no use to speak further. I retired, resolved to leave this service as soon as I had got my first month's pay; and the riot broke out a week later, on a very pleasant sunny morning in November.

Meantime I had improved my mind in the society of this Doctor Ignani; and wasted some of my time trying to get from him particulars of his invention. I did gather that his scheme was less military than medical—in other words, that in-

stead of slaying men honestly (as Your Grace's charlatan proposes to do with his stew) this quack intended to send plagues to the enemy, as God did to the Egyptians, but worse. Armies and civilians alike, it seemed, were to expire in windrows after dire agony; but as to how the plague was to be sent—which was of course the nub of the matter—his learnedness was mysterious to the point of rudeness. When I applied to my lord Gianni, furthermore, for details as to how the plague, once loosed, was to be prevented from spreading to *us*, I was again rebuffed; not surprisingly, because who but a professional soldier can imagine the calamities of war extending to himself?

Doth Your Serenity, for instance, imagine this slop of mercury and beef-bones transforming Your Highness into a mess of guts and gristle?

Very well, then.

This riot, now.

IT was a small affair, compared with the revolts I had crushed on behalf of Your Grace's grandfather; but then my forces in this case were smaller too, and for the thousandth time I thanked God for my gift of dealing with hostile situations reasonably and without the use of violence. As I have told Your Highness many times, I am not a violent man. Let me put a case to an adversary and let him assent to my proposals immediately, and I am the mildest of creatures. In the instance of this Castello Nero business, furthermore, I had not sufficient men to justify stern action—a bare hundred and thirty, armed only with swords, daggers, pistolets, arquebuses, arbalests, pikes, halberds and a score or so of those small bombs I had invented for throwing into crowds. The rest of the guard I had perforce left on that castle wall which commanded the town square where this riot was beginning—fifty men necessary to the service of the guns, which I had had depressed to cover the square and loaded with all available old chain, discarded fetters, doornails, broken spurs and suchlike. It touches me now when I think that to signify my love and goodwill toward the populace I had had the gun-muzzles wreathed with olive-branches . . .

Despite which, this crowd kept seething up to within twenty ells of where I sat my horse (I had my troops drawn up, of course, across the castle gateway)—and kept roaring confusedly that they wished audience of His Lordship, that they would not be slaughtered, that they were not brute beasts, that they were God's children and so on—interesting, if true, but not to the point. For some time I listened in silence; but when the rioters began to shout "Down with war!" and similar blasphemies, I felt it necessary to address them.

"Silence!" I therefore called out gently, yet so as to be heard clearly at the other end of the square; and at the same time raised my left hand. This was to adjust my helmet, but it served also as signal to the gunners on the walls to drop the screen of olive-branches and let the gun-muzzles grin on the assemblage.

"Brethren," I asked them, when silence had fallen, "is this meet and proper?"

They could not answer that, though they pushed forward an old syndic or some such, in a furred gown, to speak for them. Of course I could have no truck with him—even had he had his wits about him, which presently he had not; because when a crowd hath gathered for violence, violence it must have, or break forth again at some other time when one may not be ready for it.

"Brethren," I called them again, "I stand here for my lord Gianni, the father of his people."

At this there swept through the crowd a certain ripple which I did not like.

"Let our father speak to us himself!" cries someone.

"Where is Jacopo Salviati?" yells someone else—alluding to a condemned criminal on whom (I had heard) this Doctor Ignani had tried his art.

"Plague-monger!" shrieks a woman far behind—in exactly the high tone which will make a mob move forward. This mob did move; and accordingly I raised my right hand—again to adjust my helmet.

At which signal of course my sergeant of cannoneers on the wall called hoarsely, "Shall we fire, Captain?"

That stopped them.

"Brethren," I said for the third time, "I am new among you. But I know my lord (whom God preserve!) better than

any of you may. And I tell you all his care is for this county. Why should he wish you harm? You are his people."

"We are his milch-cows!" shouts somebody.

"Just so," says I. "And pray who kills his own herd?"

They laughed at that, the fodder-shoveling boors—and I sitting there in a muck of sweat.

"On the other hand," I pursued, "who that hath good sense risks his own life (as you're doing) to save the herd of a neighbor?"

They laughed at that louder than before. And seeing them in good humor, I also saw, of course, that it was time for me to become angry.

"I stand here," I shouted, thumping the pommel of my saddle (for of course I was really sitting), "as champion of my lord his mercy and justice. Who denies the same? Let him step forth!"

There was much pushing and shoving, and cries of "Thou, Pietro!" and "What didst thou say in the wine-shop, Gian?"—but at last some three or four protestants stood before me; including, to my joy, a youth with blazing eyes and no hair on his face. There is one such in every riot; students they are, usually. This was a very fine specimen—looked like a girl.

"So!" says I, at which remark all the unbelievers, save this boy and a great ugly lout in green leather, slipped back into the crowd. I had, formerly, when my voice was deep, a way of saying "So!" which made folks' livers quake.

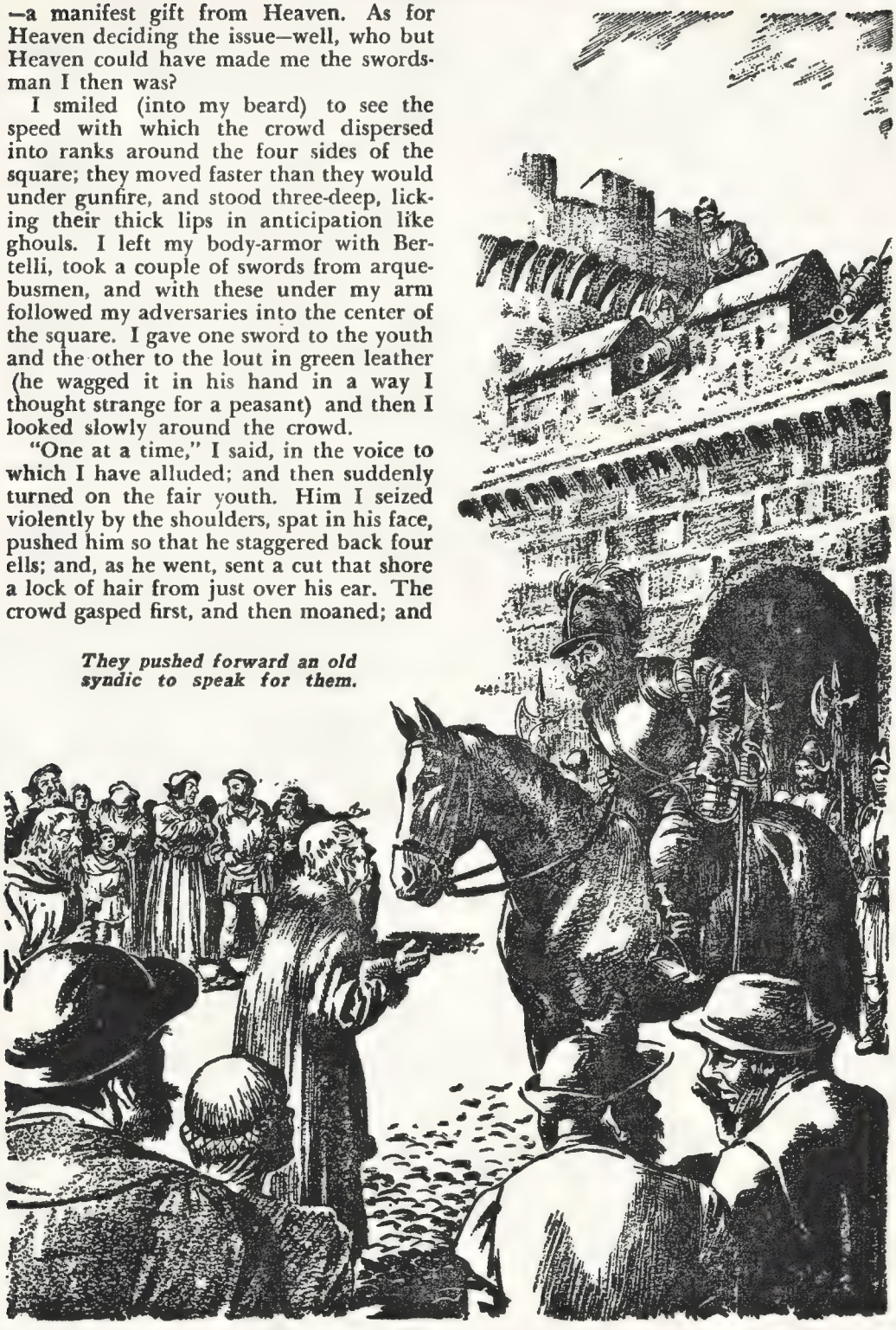
"BRETHREN," I addressed the crowd again, "I put a choice before you; at least, His Lordship doth, who abhors strife and bloodshed, at least within his own dominions. You may continue to shout and riot, in which case I shall regretfully fire into the ruck of you. Or you may watch me fight one of these your champions and let God decide whether you or His Lordship are in the right of things. Nay, I'll fight them *both*. Now, how say you?"

This, of course, was an old trick, never known to fail. Because thus crowds get their bloodshed at no risk to themselves

—a manifest gift from Heaven. As for Heaven deciding the issue—well, who but Heaven could have made me the swordsman I then was?

I smiled (into my beard) to see the speed with which the crowd dispersed into ranks around the four sides of the square; they moved faster than they would under gunfire, and stood three-deep, licking their thick lips in anticipation like ghouls. I left my body-armor with Bertelli, took a couple of swords from arquebusmen, and with these under my arm followed my adversaries into the center of the square. I gave one sword to the youth and the other to the lout in green leather (he wagged it in his hand in a way I thought strange for a peasant) and then I looked slowly around the crowd.

"One at a time," I said, in the voice to which I have alluded; and then suddenly turned on the fair youth. Him I seized violently by the shoulders, spat in his face, pushed him so that he staggered back four ells; and, as he went, sent a cut that shore a lock of hair from just over his ear. The crowd gasped first, and then moaned; and



They pushed forward an old syndic to speak for them.

then it drew in its breath with satisfaction and settled down to watch.

As for the youth, he turned deathly pale, wiped his face and then (as I had intended he should) flew at me like a wildcat.

He was a fine boy—very like one of my own, in Pisa I think it was; or perhaps I am thinking of Rome. Retreating before this youth's attack so as to keep the sun steadily in his eyes, I amused myself trying to think of the name of my own boy's mother; a most amiable girl, whom I had been sorry to leave. It seemed odd to have one so like her child and mine, poking and prodding at me with a sword, not to mention slashing at the loins to which he should have touched his hat. I was sorry to see this boy in such case, sweating and with the fear of death in his eyes (because of course he could never send his point within inches of me) but it was necessary that he suffer for the greater good. So I let him fight me—so to call it—until his knees were bending under him and he was about to drop his sword; and then, as I had intended from the beginning, I dropped my own blade, took his next passado under my arm, wrung his hilt from his hand, put an arm around him, kissed him on both cheeks and told him to go home to his mother. He was in tears of shame and rage, but the crowd roared approval—as of course I had known they would.

"Tell her Luigi Caradosso sent thee," I said, "with His Lordship's love and service."

Then I turned savagely on the green-leather man.

"But thou," says I, picking up my sword again, "art a different matter, fellow."

"Wooooo!" says the crowd. "Wooooo!"

The man in green leather seemed marvelous little abashed.

"Yes, Captain," says he, "I am a different matter. Permit me."

I wore at that time a strap around my wrist, to give it stiffness in the parry; it was tight drawn now, and an inch or two of leather protruded from the buckle. This lout in green flicked his sword upward and trimmed this fag-end off as neat as if it had been done by a saddler.

"Ha!" says I. "And art thou in the wine-growing or in the cattle-raising, may I ask?"

He smiled.

"I am rather," says he, bowing, "in what might be called the butchering business, Captain."

He resembled no butcher that I had ever seen, but this was no time for fine distinctions.

"Shall we engage?" I asked therefore.

"At your convenience," says he; so we did, and as God's my judge, within thirty seconds he had almost beheaded me. He was one of those disgusting rascals who can fight with either hand—dozens of them had sprung up in Italy since I had discovered this ability in myself; I knew of them, of course, but had not expected to find one, in green leather, in a mudhole such as Castello Nero. Aye, aye, he almost had me, but not quite; and while he was overbalanced from his effort I should certainly have pinned him through the lungs had not my point encountered, just under his rustic garb, a resistance I recognized and which caused me to take a black view of mankind. Your Grace will hardly believe it, but he was wearing chain mail!

So horrified was I at this duplicity that I stood petrified for at least the ten thousandth part of an instant; during which he drove a vile thrust at my belly. As sure as I am writing to Your Grace (up to the knees in water now) I should have been a dead man but for the Milanese corselet I always wore under my clothes.

IT was evidently time to take this rascal seriously. I tried to circle him round against the sun—as I had done the boy—but he would none of it, and indeed by severe pressure twice forced me to face the luminary myself. I tried Geminiani's stoccado on him and he turned it; I used a parade and passado that had cost me ten ducats to learn in Naples, and he twisted them into an abominable attack in tierce; and at last, when I thought him convinced that (in ignorance of his chain mail) I was addicted to his body, I sent in the *colpo di Caradosso,* which, as Your Grace knows, cuts the great vein in the neck.

But it did not cut the great vein in *his* neck; nay, he leaned back, avoiding my point by a full quarter of an inch; and smiled and said pleasantly, "I have been waiting for that for some time, Captain."

So he was a professional soldier; almost certainly guardsman to some noble (there was no other work for soldiers thereabouts)—but why thus appearing in green leather? He left me, however, no time for puzzles; he was perhaps the most persistent attacker I had fought up to that time, and he had a defense that would have broken the heart of a brass monkey. It was almost with unbelief that I found—after twenty minutes or so—that *I* was beginning to sweat; I changed sword-hands, but it was not long until the hilt began to feel greasy again and I realized that the time had come to discard gentility. Mark you, I did not do so without a struggle; I went back at him with the whole succession from *primo* to *ottavo;* I cut at his head like a peasant trimming trees; all would not do—and it was time for my men in the ranks and at the guns to have their dinner.

So, feigning to be wearier than I was, I persuaded the gentleman to rush forward as I staggered back; and when his point had missed me, drove my forked fingers into his two eyes—but gently, not so as to blind him permanently; and with a sweep of my leg against his from behind somersaulted him backward so that his head struck the cobblestone with a crack. Stamping on his stomach so that he might have no wind to continue the combat even should his skull prove thicker than I thought it, I turned pleasantly to the crowd—which was roaring with delight—and asked them if they were now sure of my loving kindness and that of My Lord Gianni.

It seemed they were—which was just as well for them; indeed the old syndic in his furred gown came forward to express loyalty in the official sense, I suppose; I do not know because, naturally, the privilege of talking belonged to me.

However, I embraced the old man—he smelled of civet—and stood with my arm about his shoulders while I addressed the crowd. I forget what I said—anything would do for them now—something about His Lordship's *terribilta* (including plagues) being directed only against his enemies and theirs; but I ended humorously.

"Not only do I prove my behalf by staying amidst you myself," I said, "but if you ladies will be a little more careless about bolting your doors at night, I'll leave you a dozen children as hostages."

I drove my forked fingers into his eyes — but gently, not so as to blind him permanently.

This was just flattery, of course—I had already made my arrangements within the castle; a still-room maid with nice eyes and a genius for getting meat into my salads on Fridays. But it served its purpose. I furthermore slapped the old syndic on the back till he crowed; waved my hand to the multitude which (except for a few husbands) was now laughing and cheering me to the echo; and, motioning two pikemen to pick up the man in green leather, I retired into the castle.

Bertelli brought the guard in after me; the crowd, with occasional glances at the muzzles of my guns, which were still manned, dispersed quietly; I had my prisoner or guest taken to my quarters and cared for; and myself went to His Lordship's cabinet to report.

He had that damned Doctor Ignani with him, boasting of some horrors he had committed on dogs. And from the way His Highness looked at me I saw he thought me thenceforth a thing of the past, and was wondering on just what he should spend my pay.

III

IT was therefore in a gloomy and receptive frame of mind that I sat down to a skin of wine with my late adversary—Paolo Calvi, his name was, captain to the Count of Monterosso, whose lands adjoined my own lord's to the south. It appeared from his conversation that this Doctor Ignani had first offered his invincible weapon to Monterosso, and then to other lords easterly, north and west of us; coming to Castello Nero (the smallest state) only after the others had rejected him.

"But now," says Paolo heavily, "of course my own lord and all the others are afeared there may be something in the business after all; and Monterosso blames me for not having murdered the fellow while he was on our land."

"Which thou'd atone for," says I, not without feeling, "by trying to murder *me*."

"Well, as to that, y'see, Luigi," says Paolo, "there were two things; first of all, Monterosso and the others had spent much time and money working up this rebellion of the people—"

"Oho!"

"—and they did not want it crushed—and then again, we captains who have been longer in the district—I am as it were Captain of the Association of Captains—"

I nodded, having been captain of the captains in Your Grace's grandfather's neighborhood. Our object was, of course, to avoid unnecessary killing of each other, while encouraging the common soldiers to do their duty. I explained my comprehension of such matters to Paolo, and he looked woundy embarrassed.

"Then I fear I must apologize to you, Captain," he said," at the same time freely forgiving you for the damage to my eyes and brains."

I begged him not to mention it.

"The fact is," he said, "we were given to understand that you were in favor of—helping with—this damned scheme to rob honest soldiers of their living."

That would be Bertelli's tale, of course. I resolved to break his nose when next I saw him, but I never did. That is how I have always been, Your Grace—chicken-hearted. Besides, I had no time.

"You take this scheme—weapon—plague—seriously, then?" I asked.

Paolo shrugged.

"A plague that beginneth with colicks," says he, "and continueth with—"

I spare Your Grace the details; they were not pretty. It seemed Paolo had overheard Ignani telling his lord with just what horrors he could afflict a population; horrors not new to me, but which might give Your Serenity bad dreams. There was still no proof that the doctor could convey his pest to whole populations, but—

"It's impossible to take such a possibility gaily," says Paolo, "especially in view of this damned peace conference."

"*Peace* conference?" says I, aghast.

"Well, to prevent war. Didst not know all their lordships are to meet here next week?" says Paolo.

"His Lordship hath been too busy confecting this weapon," says I, "to tell me aught."

Paolo nodded.

"And didst ever know a peace conference," says he glumly, "that did not start another war?"

I shook my head.

War was well enough; but a war that might kill us without giving us employment—

WELL, we finished that skin of wine and started another. But there was no cheer for us—what the devil, our occupation gone, not to mention humanity being wiped off the face of the earth! At the end of the second skin, Paolo was all for going and waking My Lord Gianni and reasoning with him, but I prevailed and we sat down again.

"But there's but one way to stop it!" cries Paolo.

"And that . . .?" I inquired, busying myself with the third skin of wine—the first had not been quite full, so that we were not drinking to excess, Your Grace, under the circumstances.

"Is to show him—them—show them all," says Paolo, swinging his arms and knocking his mug off the table, "that what shlays humanily will shlay them too. Princes can have pox—am I right?"

"Very," says I, picking up his mug and filling it. He emptied it at once and again proposed we should go pull Gianni out of

bed and tell him he was mortal. When I had again convinced him that this would entail hanging, he sat for some time muttering that this was the only way; then suddenly laid his face on the table and wept bitterly.

"Luigi," says he, when I had comforted him with another stoup of wine, "we're doomed men. Even that is of no avail. Dosh remember when gunpowder came into use?"

"Not clearly," says I, my memory scarce stretching back two hundred years.

"*I* do," says Paolo, tapping himself on the chest and winking at me through his hair. He usually wore it long in the back, but now it had fallen forward. "Until then, the noblesh had been safe'n their armor. But the cannon-balls bowled 'em over like ninepins. Did 'at send 'em back to decent weaponry? For a while they blinded cannoneers and cut their hands off, but what then? Why, they learned to command their troops from the rear, the skulking bastards, or from the top of the nearest hill, and we poor devils have been stewing in powder-smoke ever sinch. Am I right?"

"And now," Paolo goes on, pouring a mug of wine down the neck of his shirt, "There'll be no shtopping this doctor's weapon until it catches a noble and then it will be too late. Every common pershon will be gone before that. Everybody gone! Goo'bye! Goo'bye!"

He clutched me suddenly by the arm.

"Luigi!"

"Yes?"

"Lesh go pull the doctor out of bed and cut his throat."

It was of course an idea that had occurred to me; but as I told Paolo, I had dismissed it as impractical. First, my lord would be hanging-mad—

"Yesh?" says Paolo. "When Ignani ashed two thousand more ducats, an' defied your lord to his face when refused? Only yesterday?"

"I knew naught of this," says I.

"Husban's always lash to hear," says Paolo, nodding in a way that infuriated me.

"And then again," says I, "the doctor sleeps behind three barred doors, with an armed man of his own hiring outside each. Didst know that—or hast any expedient?"

"We could kill His Lordship!"

"But for the fact," I said coldly, "that I chance to be under sworn oath to guard His Lordship's life, not to take it—and that I never broke oath of that kind yet."

Paolo sat regarding me owlishly for some time; then, shaking his head and heaving a great sigh, he said again, "Goo' bye, goo'bye, everybody!"—and went to sleep.

Putting him to bed in a corner and returning to finish the skin of wine alone, I reflected that, though evidently too fond of drinking, Paolo had the root of the matter in him. He was right, he was right in everything he had said; such a fine brain, and there he lay snoring like a hog.

I shook my head sadly as the dawn came and I left the castle for a stroll in the dewy fields.

IV

THE peace conference began the following Wednesday; and was much the same as other peace conferences before and since—I mean that all the participants, having taken oath that they would not harm each other, brought with them tasters to make sure they were not poisoned in their wine, and had their four respective armies posted easy marches outside the four gates of our town. My own lord, being the host, had merely to have the guard alerted, the militia under arms in their homes, and men stationed ready by the tocsin-bells. His instructions to me and Bertelli and two sergeants—as to which of us was to kill which noble in case of trouble—were, he explained to me, just formalities.

"They know I have this weapon that can double them up with gripes," says His Lordship, grinning, "and have them dead and stinking, and their peoples with them, within four-and-twenty hours, and they'll be reasonable, never fear."

It griped me to look at him.

"*Hath* Your Lordship this weapon, in very fact?" I said.

"I have," says he, slapping his hand flat on the table. "And so, Captain Caradosso?"

His grin said that he had me, and the nobles, and the men and the women and babies of all God's lovely world, flat under that greedy hand; and it was with relish of

my plight in particular that at last he drawled out, "Dismissed!"

At the moment, he meant only that I was dismissed to attend the peace-conference; naturally outside the doors of the council chamber; taking care that the captains of his brother-nobles should not rush in at some signal such as he had arranged with me, and murder *him*.

We had a very pleasant day together in the anteroom, these captains and I—of course Paolo was one of them; though there was a tendency among them to be glum. As the yellings of their respective masters came ever more faintly through the doors and as the tones of My Lord Gianni came more and more to prevail, they saw more and more clearly—short of final extermination—the giving up of lands by these nobles and consequent reductions in their guards.

"And then to die of colick," says one.

"There'll be no soldiering more in Italy," says another.

"Nor in the whole world," says Paolo.

"No world left at all, most likely," says I. "But come—cheer up— What's that?"

It was their lordships coming out of conference, all looking somewhat pale and distraught save Gianni, who seemed to have gained weight and stature. Instead of following behind his guests, moreover, he now placed himself brazenly at their head and, with me behind him, led the way to the banqueting hall as though he were already liege lord and paramount. At table, furthermore, he seated himself first and commanded them to sit; which aforetime would have got swords drawn, but which now drew no word of protest, even. Their lordships sat there like calves.

It was a gruesome meal, at which no one but my lord Gianni really ate anything. He regaled himself largely, especially on salad, of which he was fond; I remember thinking that he ate the various leaves (after rinsing each in water for fear of poison) as though he were devouring piecemal the several estates of his guests. He urged them to eat also, asking merrily if they thought he had any need to poison *them;* but they could not and at last he grew angry and rose and bade them then in God's name to go home. Even so, only one of them had spirit to say a word; and a very mild word it was, and profited him nothing.

"Is it true, as we hear," says this Ugo of Spassone, "that Your Lordship hath had some falling out with this Doctor Ignani?"

He meant, of course, this business of the two thousand ducats heretofore mentioned by Paolo. My Lord Gianni's eyes now glittered and he showed his teeth.

"Would Your Lordship care to presume on that presumption?" he asked, crooking one finger as though to summon all the powers of pestilence.

The lords crept out without another word; he watched them go and then, "Bed!" he snaps to me.

NOW, usually, of course, I should have posted the first guard and gone to bed myself; but tonight His Lordship's greatness was great upon him and he ordained that every four hours I should cross the courtyard posting the reliefs.

'Twas thus it fell out that I was in the corridor just after midnight; when from His Lordship's room came a ghastly shriek and a noise as of a body falling on the floor. I knocked on the door, called, but there was no answer save moaning and sounds as of fingernails scrabbling on planks; so I burst in; and there, in the light of the tapers by the bed lay Gianni of Castello Nero, tied as it were in a knot with his knees to his chin, and writhing like a snake in a fish-net. As I approached him he gave another shriek, rolled over on his belly and was deathly sick; then tied himself into a knot again and strained till his eyes seemed starting from his head. It was immediately evident to me that he was not well; so, with two men of the guard, I tried (though by this time His Lordship was unpleasant to handle) to lift him and put him on the bed. But he writhed from our grasp and, falling on the floor again, twisted himself into unimaginable contortions while screaming continually like a gutted horse. Her Ladyship came in after some of this, looked at her lord and master, shrieked in her turn and swooned and was carried away. And some of the water they had brought to sprinkle her withal, I now dashed into His Lordship's face. For a moment, it seemed to check the spasms; he lay there panting, with his eyes open; and Bertelli (who had come in) crossed himself.

"How now?" says I.

Gianni placed himself brazenly at their head, and led the way to the banqueting hall.

"Captain," says Bertelli, "are not these the workings of the doctor's plague?"

Indeed they resembled the description. I saw Gianni's eyes widen suddenly, and he tried to speak. But before he could form words his agonies returned, more poignant than before, until really he seemed possessed of seven devils instead of the one he harbored when well. Your Grace will understand that out of consideration for Your Highness' feelings I am putting Gianni's suffering into words that do them no justice—such as I use to describe my own sufferings in this cottage. The difference between the two cases is that while water is killing me, 'twas water,

again dashed in the face, which brought Gianni to his senses for the second time.

"Hath the plague got out of the doctor's hands, think you?" asks Bertelli, "or hath his grudge against His Highness—"

I perceived that Gianni was trying again to speak. I bent close.

"Hang him!" he whispered.

"Hang whom, Your Grace?" I asked. "The doctor?"

"Aye. He hath killed me. Hang him!"

"You hear?" says I to Bertelli; who smiled and licked his lips. "Better take six men. Hang him from his own window—it looks on the square and will amuse the people. Not too thin a rope, mind."

Thick ropes choke slower—as I was about to explain to My Lord; but alas! he was suddenly again beyond all interest in such matters and so remained until about six in the morning, when he broke into a great sweat and seemed easier. By that time, of course, Doctor Ignani—and by the way his bodyguard, who *would* fight—had been dead some hours. Moreover, exceeding orders in the excess of his zeal, Bertelli had burned every paper and smashed every pot, retort or pipkin he could find; and even hewn the furniture to pieces in search of hidden drawers. When I pointed out to him that My Lord might haply be displeased at this, the lieutenant thought it wise to leave the county, which is why I never found time to break his nose. He rose to be a captain of freelances, I have heard, and was killed in the Romagna. God rest his soul! Who knows but, save for him, some paper might have survived to give Gianni the secret of that invincible weapon and let him lay waste the world?

WHEN I thus reported to his bedside, he made a virtue of necessity and said that never, having experienced the torments himself, would he have let any other human being, be he twenty times an enemy, endure them. Which sentiment I saluted, inwardly thanking God nevertheless for Bertelli and (subject to divine approval) for my old friends the monks.

For among their deplorable habits had been one of calling on very sick persons and inducing them to leave their property to the convent—which, as I have said, was no convent at all, nor they real monks. After some time it chanced that Marco the Hospitaller, gathering simples, came upon an herb very like the lambs' parsley we use in salads, but differing therefrom in that it gave hideous cramps—very like those promised by Doctor Ignani—and the fear of death for some few hours, during which a last testament might be made by the sufferer, who then recovered. This benefited the good brethren and harmed no one; but it occurred to Marco later that inheritance might be hastened by the use of real poison—which alas! was how he came to be burned.

In my time, though, he had been just an honest herbalist; I used to gather his herbs for him—which is why I could so easily find this one in the fields about Castello Nero, when I walked in them that dawning while Paolo snored. My little friend the still-room maid—all unwitting—was delighted at fresh lambs' parsley—as she thought it—to put in His Lordship's salad; and what happened thereafter Your Grace is to some extent aware. I seek no credit; let Marco and Bertelli have it all; I have had my reward—thirty years of honest soldiering since then, and now this open-air cottage to die in from the rheumatism. Above all, I have the thought that I was true to my oath to safeguard Gianni's life; for most like he would have died of the plague had he loosed it.

Now if in view of my experience in such matters and my urgent need of a few extra florins, Your Grace would wish me to come to Rometia and look into the claims of this rogue who wants to blow up the world with mutton-bones, I shall hasten to the comparative dryness of Your Excellency's castle and exert every knowledge and ability I possess for the benefit of Your Serenity in his turn.

Being in all humbleness
Your Eminence's obliged, wet, respectful
loving servant
L. Caradosso
Captain.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE DUKE

Secretary: Dismiss that alchemist. Tell Caradosso of it. Add xxx florins to the old devil's pension and give him a dry house FARTHER AWAY FROM MY PALACE.

P. Dvx.

A Fact Story

A HEAD FOR UNCLE JOE

By

EDWARD B. REYNOLDS

SOUTH AMERICANS knew it was a good thing when the United States decided to send a generous portion of its armed forces to the Latin countries to aid them in protecting the Western Hemisphere from German or Japanese aggression. And when the *loco norteamericano soldados* changed their American banknotes into the coin of the realm and fanned out in all directions looking for souvenirs, they knew they *had* a good thing. And among the many results of that widespread distribution of good hard cash was the back-to-work movement of the headhunters.

Now amateur headhunting and professional headhunting are two different things, even though they might meet on a fundamental common ground. One might say, as seems to be the case in the sports world, that the amateurs lay the groundwork, build up the reputation by making fans conscious of what's going on, and then the professionals move in and sop up the gravy. One might say that's what happened in the headhunting business.

It used to be, and still is for that matter, although good neighbors should kindly ignore such things, that headhunting was strictly the *costumbre* of certain tribes of Indians far back in the interior of the Amazon Basin country that draws its water from numerous tributaries reaching far into the huge jungles of swamps, trees, and matted vines. This country continues to remain virgin and unexplored and the color of large portions of it on maps that indicate Ecuadorean, Peruvian, Columbian, or Brazilian territory is largely determined by where the map was made.

It is back in these jungles that headhunting retains its amateur status and where it got its original start before the days when souvenir-hunting tourists weaned it into the professional ranks and still later when the *loco norteamericano soldados* made it big business.

Among the amateurs headhunting was strictly a process of warfare and the heads were a byproduct of raids whereby the warriors added to their riches in the way of loot and prevented race suicide, through a high casualty rate from disease, natural hazards, and their intermittent skirmishes, by adding another woman or two to the wives in their households.

The whole affair was never very glamorous due to the South American Indian's tendency to take no chances or give an enemy an even break. A war party of Jivaros would creep silently up on an enemy camp. If the element of surprise was successful, the ones who were attacked rushed panic-stricken to the safety of their houses while the assaulters killed all who failed to escape. There was generally no fight involved and the successful raiders, after collecting their heads, would rush madly away in an effort to put as much space as possible between themselves and

their foes, so that the tables would not be turned.

After they reached a safe place, they went to work on the heads and it was here that they made their reputation. For it was here that they exercised the art of shrinking the heads to the size of an apple or an orange while retaining the continuity of features and expression. This art was not surpassed until the whole affair went on a professional basis and the professionals, coupling modern tools with the aboriginal methods, were able to turn out a neater job.

WHEN THEY arrived at their rendezvous the headhunters would undo the vines on which the heads were strung (by the simple expedient of passing the vine through the mouth and out the neck in a manner similar to which sportsmen string a catch of fish). The heads were placed on the ground while some of the group gathered wood and brush to build large fires. Meanwhile, the medicine man got to work on those who were to shrink the heads so that no evil spirits from their fallen enemies could extract future vengeance.

Some say that during the process of fending off the evil spirits the medicine man blew tobacco juice into the warrior's nostrils. This, however, is unlikely as it is doubtful if the Jivaro Indians had access to tobacco, and it is more probable that some concoction, secret to the medicine man, was used. At any rate, as with most primitive tribes, some sort of mumbo-jumbo was indulged in before the actual work began.

With the removal of the hex the boys went to work. First they parted the hair from the back of the neck to the top and slit along the line of the part, cutting until they reached the skull. Then they started peeling it off like a grapefruit rind, tearing away the flesh until they were able to slip the skull out of the opening, leaving the boneless head like a flat sack.

After this, the back of the head was sewn up with thread made from vines, the mouth was closed with wooden splinters and tied, the upper eyelids were pulled shut, and the eyebrows were blocked into place with strips of wood which were fastened to the eyelids. Then the whole business was tossed into an earthenware pot of cold water and gradually heated. This was a ticklish process. If the head was scalded the hair was likely to fall out. Yet it had to be heated enough for the fat to begin to melt so that the shrinking process would start.

Before the water came to a boil the head was removed and filled with hot sand taken from beneath the fire. While the melted fat was oozing out of the skin it had to be smoothed continuously with hot, flat rocks so that the features would retain their shape. This must have taken the Jivaros a considerable length of time with their primitive methods.

Finally, when the last bit of grease had been rendered out, the head was allowed to dry, having shrunken to the size of a large orange with the skin hard, smooth, and tanned into a form of leather. Before drying, the mouth was generally twisted and shaped into an agonized expression so that the owner could show how ferocious he was and how his victim had suffered. Pity is not a virtue among these more primitive Indians.

At last, with the job completed, the raiders were able to continue on to their home village for the big celebration—and what a celebration! They told and retold the battle scenes, danced, whooped, ate, and drank until they fell into a stupor to sleep off their hysteria. Naturally, a few of these heads managed to make their way to the outside world, along with stories of the activities of these tribes. In time there came expeditions and scientists; but, even to this day, little is known of the customs of these Indians. The expeditions just didn't get that far back.

Also, along about the same time, Teddy Roosevelt was making exploration popular by gallivanting around the various countries getting a little practice with his big stick on the birds, beasts, and reptiles of jungle and plain. . In a short time, every tycoon tourist who took a trip down South made an effort to get hold of some rare specimens of flora or fauna to present to a museum back home.

IT DIDN'T take long before the *muchachos* south of the border got the idea. You can't very well sneeze at a tycoon loaded with *Yanqui* greenbacks. In fact, the

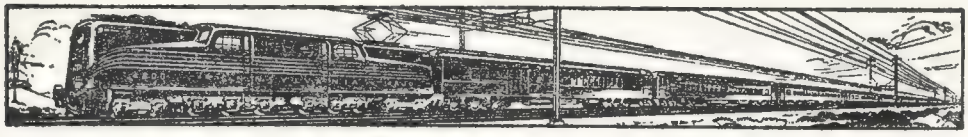
Latino with his ideas of courtesy thinks it's a whole lot better to utter the sibilant, nicer-sounding *"Si, si"* than the harsher *"No."* At first, they always followed it up with a shrug of the shoulders and a *"Posible mañana, Senor"*—and that was natural, too.

Now, you can't expect a fellow, much as he covets the *Yanqui* dollar and much as he wants to be obliging, to hie himself out into a trackless jungle in search of someone as belligerent as the average Jivaro Indian. He might have just enough bad luck to find him. And if he did, a fellow would feel mightv uncomfortable walking up to a character like that and attempting to bring the conversation around to the business of headhunting. You would be likely to have a feeling that he was looking you over for size. They say that these Jivaros take their work very seriously and are always striving to get ahead—and they are not too particular whose head. So, the obliging South American vendors did the next best thing.

It wasn't long before a few enterprising souls experimented around with their neighbors' dogs and cats until they, too, learned the art of shrinking heads. It is said that in Panama City, where tourists and crew members aboard the hundreds of ships that pass through the locks gather in great numbers, there is a man who really went into the business whole hog. He got so that he not only could shrink a head, but he could shrink a whole body. And in Ecuador, almost any native was likely to call you to one side, secretively reach into a box or under the folds of his cloak, and come up with a head for sale. At any rate, it wasn't long before the American tycoons were coming home with a grisly "little something I picked up down South" and proceeding to lecture on the natives of South America.

At first these South American "merchants" endeavored to stay relatively honest. They hired ghouls to dig up graves and get the heads of the recently buried, and haunted the hospitals and funeral homes for what they could pick up. This, of course, sometimes occasioned a little trouble due to the squeamishness of some people on discovering the head of a fond relative, whom they had thought safely interred, hidden in some peddler's cache. Sometimes these relatives became downright irritated and an irritated Latino can't even be reasoned with, much less be made to see the merits of individual initiative, or the necessities of international trade. Besides, it was a lot of work.

Furthermore, even though life in some parts of South America is not too precious a commodity, except to the individual concerned, and death is taken with a certain stoicism, it was best not to gather a head until the bearer's body had stopped



TIMED FOR TOMORROW

DID YOU KNOW that high speed schedules (mile-a-minute or over, start to stop), have increased a hundred fold in the last sixteen years? Today one railroad system alone operates over twenty-seven thousand miles daily on such schedules. Read the whole fascinating story of America's amazing railroad speedup in the April issue of RAILROAD MAGAZINE. It's just one of the many informative and entertaining features which make this publication a *must* on the reading list of every railroad man and rail hobbyist.

25c PER COPY

RAILROAD MAGAZINE

205 East 42nd St., New York City 17

$2.50 BY THE YEAR

moving of its own accord. He was always certain to have a lot of relatives ready to take umbrage at anything of that sort, and besides, the police around the cities and civilized villages where tourists were most plentiful had gotten modern ideas on the subject even though the jail where you would be incarcerated is definitely medieval.

Consequently, there was no way to cut down the excessive labor involved and the heads continued to be relatively scarce. Today, in Ecuador, a genuine human head, but not an actual Jivaro war trophy, will cost from five to six hundred sucres. This may be figured in American money by the exchange rate of thirteen sucres for one American dollar. In Panama City and Colon, where a larger number of wealthy tourists and the majority of the soldiers are to be found, the price is somewhat higher.

These modern heads are a much smoother job than the real Jivaro trophy because of the use of better tools. The stitching up the back of the head is finer and harder to see. Also, through the use of heated irons, the skin has a better texture. The real Jivaro head can be told by the more primitive stitching and texture of the tassel that hangs from the splinters that hold the mouth closed. However, this is at times closely imitated.

Naturally, the problems of supply showed themselves long before the war with its heavy influx of American soldiers. And the "businessmen" endeavored to do something about it through the use of animal skins and a razor. Some creditable imitations were made through the use of goatskin, with its long hair. The skin was stretched over a mold and cut to the desired contours. The face was shaved, leaving hair for the eyebrows, and the mouth was formed with a more agreeable expression—which proved to be good business, as it had a gentler effect on the sensibilities of the customers.

MONKEYS, however, proved to be the best subjects and it was these animals that were most widely used when the American soldiers put the profession into the realm of big business with their avid desire for souvenirs.

It was a happy thought to single out the monkeys as a source of heads because any native is always ready to knock over any monkey he sees. The monkey is a fine and major source of food. They are cooked in the form of soup, stew or roast.

The larger monkeys taste like beef and are said to be the one animal of the southern forests that is not tiring as a year-around diet.

The only objection to the monkey as food—that is, to most North Americans—is to see it in preparation. The hair is singed off and when it is cleaned and ready for cooking it looks like a large baby. But to the Indian's notion, now that he has a market for the head, it puts him in the thrifty category of the Chicago packing house that advertises that it uses everything "but the squeal."

The process of preparing the monkey head for market involves preservation through a form of tanning rather than shrinking, and that, in itself, is a much easier and less messy arrangement. The finished article, after the judicious and artistic use of a razor plus the addition of a mane of long black hair, is quite satisfactory. These types of "artificial" heads start at three hundred sucres on the market. A good bargainer can generally get the price down to two hundred sucres.

Now two hundred sucres is more like it, as the general idea of the American soldiers in getting the heads was to get something to startle the folks back home and bolster the aura of adventure around a GI in foreign service. Most of them knew the heads were imitations, but they didn't mind that at all. It was just a gag to slow down old Uncle Joe who used to brag about his adventures in the last war.

Of course, the South American "businessman" didn't know about Uncle Joe and the gag, so, consequently, he thought he was putting over a fast one and was quite happy. Sometimes it was a question as to whether the Latinos thought the *americano soldados* were just plain damn fools or actually *loco*. But the Americans didn't care.

Life is tame enough at its best when you have to spend day after monotonous day in the Caribbean guarding the Big Ditch, and it was quite a morale builder to sit back and imagine how Uncle Joe's eyes would bug out as big as golf balls when he pulled that head from its box.

NIGHT SOUNDS

S. OMAR BARKER

Something there is that shrinks the throat
In the wolf's nocturnal note,
Howled from some moon-shadowed ledge
At the somber timber's edge.

The cruising owl, on silent wings,
Screams a hunting cry that brings
Something half akin to fear
To the listening camper's ear.

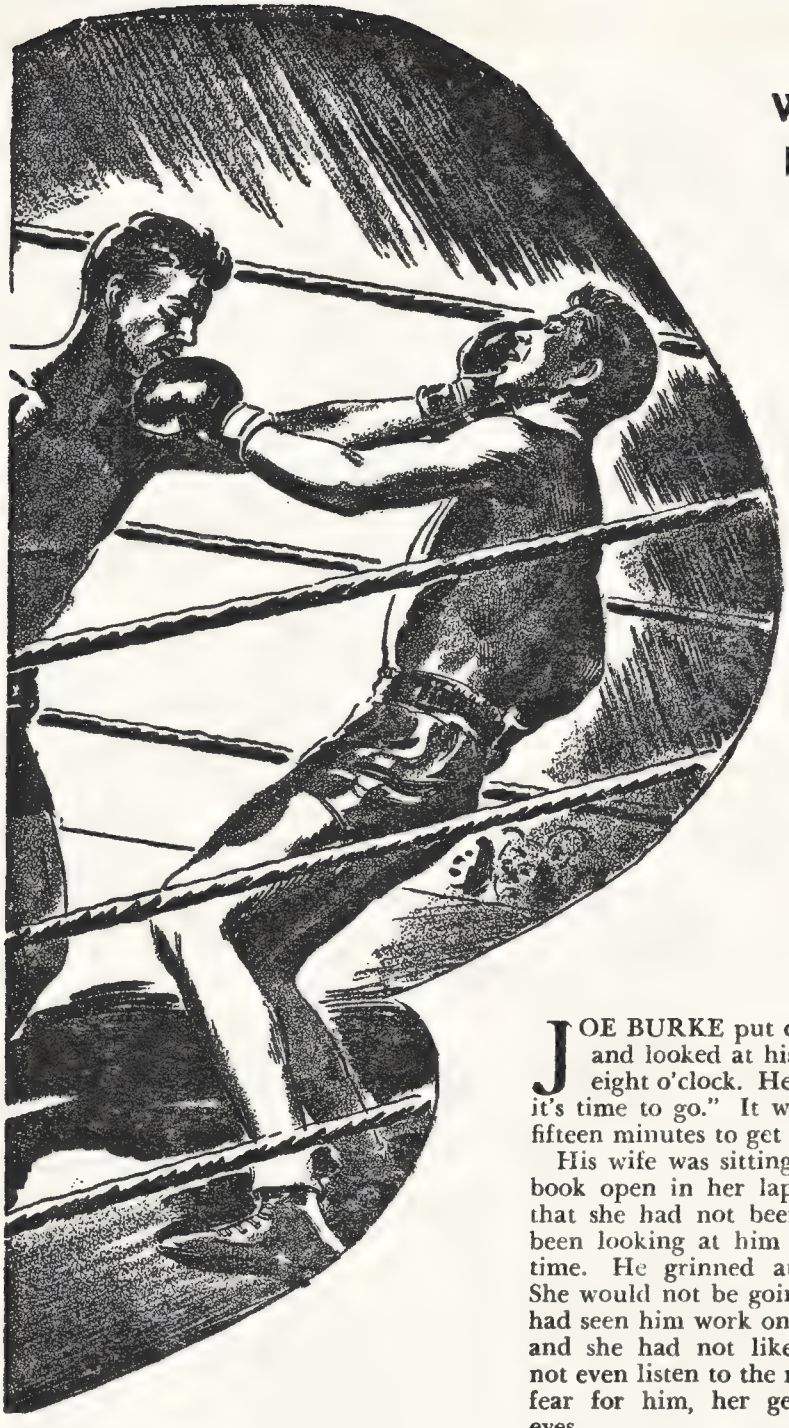
Padded footfalls of a bear
Rouse a tingle in the hair,
And the bullbat's muffled whir
Has the phantom power to stir
Sharp awareness of the night,
Seasoned by vestigial fright.

On unheeding eardrums beat
Night sounds from a city street,
But the cry of beast or bird
By the very blood is heard.

Unto the wilderness man is bound
By nostalgic chains of sound
Whose wild origins renew
Danger's ancient rendezvous.

DECORATION BY L. STERNE STEVENS

BEAK-BUSTING
IS BUSINESS
B M 4
Raised Ringside



Burke socked him again with the left and pulled the trigger on the right.

By
WILLIAM
HOLDER

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN MEOLA

JOE BURKE put down the newspaper and looked at his wristwatch. It was eight o'clock. He said, "Well, I guess it's time to go." It would take him only fifteen minutes to get over to the Garden.

His wife was sitting across the room, a book open in her lap. He realized now that she had not been reading, but had been looking at him steadily for a long time. He grinned at her and winked. She would not be going to the fight. She had seen him work once, a long time ago, and she had not liked it. Milly would not even listen to the radio. Her love, her fear for him, her gentleness, filled her eyes.

Her brother Tom was a thin and nervous man. He had come down from upstate for the fight. He said, "You're fighting this guy Malta, and you sit here

and read the newspaper like you just got home from work. You should be nervous."

"I'll be nervous later," Burke said. He knew it was the truth. The ice would form in his belly and he would shiver in a heavy robe in a hot dressing room. But that would be later. There was a time for everything.

Milly's brother said, "You ought to give this up while you can still see. You and Milly come on upstate with me. The business is fine, and it could grow if I had some money. Come in with me and stop this getting your brains knocked out. You're getting too old."

"I'm thirty-two," Burke said.

Tom was a practical man. "In your business, that's old," he said. "In the laundry game, it doesn't matter if you can go fifteen rounds. People wear clothes, they get them dirty. You throw them in a machine, and maybe sometimes the buttons come off. Who cares? I've got the whole county, now. With some money, we can expand and . . ."

Burke didn't bother to listen. He had heard it all before. He was looking at his wife. There was a dream in Milly's eyes about which she seldom spoke. The picture consisted of a house against a hillside somewhere, and Burke through with the ring. He had seen it in her eyes for a long time.

He put on his coat and hat, and his brother-in-law said, "I'll go over with you." He took a ticket from his vest pocket and said, "This a good seat?"

Burke nodded. "You sit any closer, you'll get blood on your shirt." He looked at Milly and knew he shouldn't have said that.

He held her close for a moment before he left, and her mouth was soft and sweet. She said, "Take care of yourself, Joe. Don't get hurt. And win." The unimportant thing was always last, with Milly.

IN THE cab that took them to the Garden, his brother-in-law talked, and Burke listened absently. The nervousness was starting now. The ice was beginning to form. His brother-in-law broke it for a moment.

"Can you beat this guy, Joe? This Malta?"

Burke said, "Maybe. I dunno." But he knew, all right. He said, "He's young. Twenty-four, twenty-five. Very strong. Very good. I've seen him work." He had seen him once, against Johnny Breen. He remembered all of it. He said, "It's a matter of styles. He's a tank and I'm a fancy guy. He's hard to slow down."

And he thought, *The punk has a head like a fire hydrant. He'll keep comin' all night. I couldn't slow him down with a rifle.*

"A matter of styles," he said. A matter of seven or eight years. He'd rather give away fifteen pounds.

He was glad when they got to the Garden. Tom was a nice guy, and the laundry business was undoubtedly a fine business, but tonight he had to deal with Johnny Malta.

They parted in front of the Garden. Tom's thin hand was full of affection and concern. He echoed Milly's words. "Take care of yourself, Joe. Don't get hurt. And win." He was a very nice guy.

Burke grinned. "Don't worry. I'll see you back at the house."

Lew Morano was waiting in the dressing room. He had Burke's things in a leather grip. He said, "How you feel?"

Burke nodded. "O.K. The legs could stand a rub." He got out of his clothes and lay on the table, and Lew went over him with oil and practiced hands. When he was through, Burke was loose and relaxed. He put on socks and shoes, trunks and a heavy woolen robe, lay back on the table.

Lew said, "Evans has a kid in the six rounder before the semi. He'll be around in a little while."

Willy Evans was the best corner man in the business. Maybe the best besides Lew, Burke thought. And maybe he'd need them bad in there tonight, before it was over. He put that out of his head and tried to doze. The growing lump of ice in his belly kept him awake.

He thought of Malta, how he would handle him. If he could handle him. If he somehow got by Malta, he could have another shot at Benny Poole, the champ. He didn't know whether he wanted that or not. He remembered the last go with Benny. It had been rough.

Lew went out of the room for a moment, then came back. He said, "They just put

the semi on," and Burke sat up and Lew started to tape his hands. He was neat and carefully expert. Willy Evans came in. He was a short fat man, and now there was a broad smile on his face. He said, "A very nice boy I got. He give that iceman a fine pastin'. I'll make a dollar with him, he minds his business."

There was a knock on the door and Burke said, "Come in," and then he was sorry he'd opened his mouth; he knew the two men would have come in anyway.

Coston was a man of medium height, impeccably dressed. His face was drawn and peaked under a soft brown hat. His eyes were like twin animals, terribly alive in his strangely dead face.

The man with him was light-skinned and huge, and he moved with a shambling gate. The sleeves of his coat were fully cut, but they were tight around his arms. His face wore a mildly pleased expression that did not change. His name, Burke knew, was Kraus. In the past ten years, no one had ever seen Coston without this monster at his side.

Coston's face broke in a strange smile in which the eyes took no part. He said, "Hello, Joe. How're things?"

Burke nodded. "O.K. Sit down." No matter what was coming, he knew he wouldn't like it.

"We're only goin' to stay a minute," Coston said. His eyes hit Lew and Willy Evans, discarded them. Kraus stood off to one side. Coston said, "How does it work tonight, Joe? How you got it tagged?"

Burke didn't have to think about it now. He had given the matter great consideration. He sat on the rubbing table and said, with an honest workman's lack of shame, "I figure Malta. He's comin'. I'm goin'. What the hell. I never kid myself."

Coston's eyes were searching, intense, looking for a flaw they couldn't find. He nodded, slowly and twice. "That's the way I squared it. I bet Malta. Big."

Burke said nothing.

Coston said, "You couldn't be mistaken? I don't like mistakes, Burke."

BURKE looked at him, met the probing eyes. "I never flagged a fight, Coston. Never will. This is a business I been in for twelve years. When I figure a fight, it's just like I'm some guy sittin' out in a ringside seat. I look it over careful. Maybe I see more angles than you do. To me it looks like Malta."

Coston said, "You can't handle him for ten rounds?"

Burke shook his head. "He's a strong boy. A bull. And nifty. He's got enough cute to get him by Poole."

Coston said, "I'm bettin' fifty thousand to make twenty-five, Burke." His eyes said much more.

Burke said, "It's a good bet. A good bet. The way I figure it."

Coston said, "You better not be wrong." His quick smile did not soften the words.

"I'm not often wrong." He felt the anger growing in him.

"Not this time," Coston said. "Don't be wrong this time."

Burke said, "I figure Malta." The hell with this. He was getting sick of it. You couldn't keep this up all night.

Coston walked to the door. He said, "Take care of yourself." Kraus followed him, shambling silently. They faded through the door.

In a moment, Willy Evans said, "That big guy. He gives me the creeps."

"The hell with them," Burke said. The insistence of the man had punished his pride. "They want to bet but they don't want to worry. You tell them one and one are two, but they think you got somethin' up your sleeve. The hell with them."

He didn't like to lose. When he had to, he didn't like to talk about it before it happened. He said to Lew and Willy, "It doesn't figure any other way. This kid has too much stuff. Five years ago, maybe two years ago, I could have taken him. Not now."

Lew said quietly, "I guess you're right, Joe."

Burke said nothing. He knew they both had bets on Malta. They liked Burke. They were his friends. But neither of them was stupid enough to throw a dollar out the window.

Willy Evans said, "You don't tell people everything you know, do you, Joe?"

"The hell with him," Burke said. "He talked too hard. He figures he just walks into a room with that gorilla and everybody should scare."

Lew said softly, "They never fool. Nobody ever catches them jokin'."

Burke agreed silently. Coston was almost as big a bettor as you could find. He lived to win. And Lew was right. He never fooled.

Burke watched Lew finish with his hands, and then he walked around the room for five minutes, moving his arms, loosening. The door opened and someone said, "You're on, Burke."

The Garden was packed. Middleweights always brought the crowd out, Burke thought. But then, he'd never given them a bad show, and they liked this Malta. The sockers always fill the house.

He sat in the corner while various members of the trade were introduced from the ring, then he listened to the spiel: "Two leading contenders . . . Johnny Malta, sensational hitter from the Coast . . . 159½ pounds . . . Joe Burke, long a favorite in this ring . . . 158."

They went out to the center of the ring then, Burke working his hands into the new gloves. Manny Green, the referee, spent a few minutes saying the usual things, and Burke looked at Malta. The guy was built like a tree-stump on stilts, a heavyweight from the hips up. The heavy, sloping neck ran down to shoulders padded with power. His face was passive, expressionless.

They went back to the corners, and Lew took the robe from Burke's shoulders and said, "Be careful out there."

Burke muttered through the mouthpiece, "Sure. That's all I've got to think about." The ice was heavy in his gut, now. The bell was a knife slashing into his nerves. It turned him and sent him out. He met Malta in the middle of the ring. He stabbed a left to the head, Malta hooked a left that he took on the shoulder, and the ice melted suddenly, and he was free to do his evening's work.

A fine night's work. A fight he probably couldn't win; a fight he didn't dare to win.

HE CAME into the corner after the fifth and said, "The guy can sock." There was a lump over his right eye, his left side was as sore as an old boil.

"You got the edge," Willy Evans said. "A big edge."

Burke nodded. "That figured. But it's downhill from here. The legs are slidin'."

He looked across the ring at Malta. The guy was leaning back, relaxed and strong. His mouth was cut and his eye was cut, but not badly, and it didn't mean a thing. A cut mouth didn't bother him. He'd keep coming in there all night, winging those heavy shots to the head and body. It was all right as long as you had plenty of legs. But if you couldn't stay away from him, you were through. Burke knew he was starting to be through. Malta was getting to him, now.

He took a beating in the sixth. The crowd couldn't see it. From three rows out he was still Burke the fancy man, stabbing with that lovely left hand, moving freely, the ring all his.

But it wasn't that way up under the lights. His legs weren't taking him where he wanted to go as quickly as he had to get there. His left hand was finding Malta, stabbing him, annoying him, but it lacked some of its authority of the earlier rounds. Malta was too strong. He took the left on that bullet head when he had to, then came in under, thumping those shots to the belly. It was his ring now, not Burke's. Malta was making the fight.

Near the end of the round Burke was cornered. He tried to go out to the left but Malta would have none of it. He drove both hands to the body, and Burke felt the pain deep within himself. Malta started the left hand again. Burke saw the shoulder drop that fraction of an inch, drove his own right hand straight across. It stopped Malta. The guy's expression was a little surprised, then bored, but Burke walked out of the corner, found fighting room again.

The hand felt all right. He hadn't hit anyone that hard with a right hand in years. Not since he'd broken it to pieces on Harry Graham in Philly, a long time ago.

Malta caught him again before the round ended, but Burke tied him up inside, turned him, hit him again with the right hand. He liked the sound of the bell.

Willy Evans worked on his legs, and Burke could feel the tired muscles fluttering under Willy's hands. Willy said, "The Killer. I ain't seen you hit a bag that hard with a right hand."

Burke said nothing. He wondered if he could go the ten. Four more. Malta

was as strong as when they'd started. It wasn't that way with him. He was catching it, now.

He thought of Coston. He grinned bitterly. The guy didn't have to worry about his money from here in.

Malta caught up with him in the seventh. Halfway through the round Malta hooked a left, Burke missed with a right, and then the freight car hit him. He was against the ropes, and Malta was throwing leather faster than a man would think it possible. Heavy leather. Burke took a lot of it before his knees slid out from underneath him.

He knew what was going on all the time. He heard Green start the count, but his legs were filled with jelly and would not bring him erect again. He leaned with his back against the lower rope, used it to pull himself to his knees. He managed to get up at "Eight." He held his gloves out to Green, who took them to wipe away the resin. It was another few seconds of respite.

Malta came to him fast. A little too fast. Burke stepped inside a hook and fastened to him like a freckle. He leaned on him, tied up his heavy arms, felt the strength flow back into himself. When Green got them apart, he was in fairly good shape. Malta came back into him at once, and Burke put out the left hand and started to go away.

But his legs wouldn't take him. They were fluttery. There was no bounce in them. He had to stay where he was. And when Malta came in, Burke fed him a straight right hand, hooked the left to his head. It slowed Malta just enough. His rhythm was broken. He shuffled in again and Burke bounced the right hand off his head. The bell rang out.

He caught it in the eighth. The round was only a minute old when Malta bulled him against the ropes and really plastered him. Burke felt the skin slice over his left eye, and then the blood came down. He stabbed at Malta, tried to hold him off, but the man's hands were busy belting, draining Burke's strength.

He tried to go away but there was no exit. Malta was fully in charge, now, hooking in his shots. So Burke stopped looking for a way out. He punched to save his head. He hooked the left, clubbed the right at Malta's chin, shoved him off and drilled the right hand at him again. Malta was disturbed, his plans upset. He backed off a pace or two, and Burke stayed where he was. He couldn't have moved for a million dollars. Malta came in again, low and hooking, and Burke stabbed him with the left, socked the right hand home. Malta pulled up short as the bell rang out.

THEY worked on him hard in the corner. Willy Evans worked hard on the eye, stopping the bleeding, stuffed the cut with cotton and dope. Lew rubbed his neck silently, gave him a mouthful of water, washed his mouthpiece. The ten-second buzzer pushed them out of the ring too soon.

Lew stood outside the ropes, his hand still working on Burke's neck. He said, "Joe. No accidents. Remember what that Coston said."

Burke didn't get it for a moment. He'd been fighting to save his skin, was all. He turned and looked at Lew and saw he wasn't joking. He started a battered grin, then checked it. He thought about the thing.

He went in for the ninth, and Malta came to him slowly, now, not tired but wary, not afraid but respectful. His chin was buried behind his shoulder, and he hooked with the left. Burke took it on the shoulder and went inside and rested a bit.

The thought that Lew had pressed upon him was an awkward thing, and now that it was his own he fumbled with it. It didn't make much sense, but it was there. It had shape and reality and more substance than he cared to lend it. The thought was irregular, out of line. It didn't figure, as he had said to Coston and himself. He thought of Coston, and Malta whipped a wicked hook to his head, and he forgot about Coston and gave his mind to his work, as he had always done.

Malta hit him with a right and left that rocked him. Dimly, he heard the great noise of the mob, then he was planted solidly, flat on his feet, punching with the man before him.

Not punching as Malta punched. Punching with a precision that came only with the years, that was the mark of a

master workman. He was beating Malta to the kick, taking the brutal power out of the man's blows.

And Malta broke the rally, stepped back, and now the noise of the crowd was a great and terrible thing.

Burke did not hesitate. He stepped forward, hooked a left to Malta's head, drove the right hand home with all his power. It landed flush. Malta wavered. Burke socked him again with the left, pulled the trigger on the right. It was on the target. Malta went over on his side, a surprised expression covering his face.

And Burke almost screamed with pain. The hand was gone again. He had used a broken club with too much force tonight. It had lasted through the years because he had employed it wisely and with regard for its frailty. It was gone now.

He leaned in the angle of the ropes, now, and he suddenly knew it was a good thing. The hand was gone, and that meant that he was gone, and that was as it should be. The fight hadn't figured to go like this. Malta, he saw, would get up. And when he got up, Burke would soon go down, for there was no strength in him now, and in a matter of seconds Malta would be the bull again. Coston would be happy. Everyone would be happy.

The right hand he'd been saving for so long. The right hand he would never work with again, for he knew that now it was beyond repair. It had broken just in time to save him from a lot of trouble.

Malta, he saw, was on one knee at "Six," strength flowing back into him like water flowing into a pool. The thing would end the way it should end. It would be an honest loss, as Burke had figured it.

Malta got up. Green wiped the guy's gloves off on his shirt and stepped away. Burke stood where he was and Malta came to him slowly. That heavy left shoulder dropped a bit as Malta started the hook.

It was too nice to waste. You didn't spend your life learning a trade in order to pass up an opportunity like this. Burke thought of the hand and the hand was really not a point in question. It was through. It had outlived its usefulness in this sense. He thought of Coston, and because Coston and men like him had never been a consideration, he said to himself, *The hell with Coston.*

He threw the heavy, broken right hand in there, over the hook. He drove it with all the power in his back, his legs. It was dead on the target. Burke cried out as Malta fell. Malta wavered for a moment then fell forward, flat on his face.

Standing in a corner, Burke closed his eyes, tried to close his mind against the pain. He got control of things, looked at Malta. He hadn't moved. Green could count a thousand, and Malta would never hear him.

The Garden was a madhouse as Malta's handlers came in to get him. Burke walked on rubber legs to his corner, and Lew and Willy met him with sour but approving grins. They sat him on the stool, and in a few moments he felt that he would live. He sat up and said, "Who's got the small bottle?" Willy gave him a long pull, and things started to straighten out.

Lew said, "You haven't hit like that in six, seven years. That lousy hand."

Burke nodded. "It's really lousy now. A mess."

Willy Evans gave consideration to his words. "It was pretty. It was as nice a fight as I've seen you make. Not smart, though, Joe. Definitely not smart."

Burke said, "Coston?"

Willy said, "Coston. And you. And Lew and me and some other people. Mostly Coston."

Burke said, "The hell with him. It just came out wrong. It didn't figure this way at all."

"You tell him that," Lew said. "It'll amuse him. Him and that ape Kraus."

THEY got to the dressing room finally, and in a little while cleared it of the crowd, and Lew cut the glove and the bandages off the right hand, and he whistled. It was a pretty sight. Willy Evans said, "It looks like one of my wife's old hats."

Burke wasn't worrying about the hand. He thought, reasonably enough, of Coston. And of Kraus. He had heard a lot about Kraus.

The shower soaked the weariness out of him, and Lew and Willy cleaned up his face, put a neat patch over his eye. Burke said, "It's all right. I'm going across the

street to the hospital and let them look at the hand, and they can put a stitch in the eye."

He looked at the pair of them. He said, "I'm sorry you got loused up on the fight. I'll square it with you. I'll see you around tomorrow."

Willy said, "Forget it. You pay us plenty. It was worth five hundred bucks to see that thing." He hesitated a moment. "You sure you don't want us to go over to the hospital with you?"

Burke could see he wasn't anxious to. He said, "I can walk across the street." And he wondered if he'd be allowed to. "I'll see you later."

The Garden was empty when he went out. He thought of going straight home, but the hand was giving him hell. He thought of Milly, and of the tenderness that would be in her eyes when he opened the door.

Then he thought of Coston. He cursed silently and walked to the hospital.

They fixed the hand. They wanted to X-ray it and see if they could set it, but he thought of the possible shortness of the night and decided it might be a waste of time. They bandaged it with skill and doped it, and he was to come back tomorrow, they said. They put a neat stitch in his eye, and he thanked them with grace and left a big bill and told them he'd be back in the morning.

He went out into Fiftieth Street, and it was empty and dark. Nervousness was forming in him again, and he fought against it. There was a cab at the curb, down at the hospital entrance, and he raised his hand. The motor started and it pulled up beside him.

He opened the door. No light flashed on, as in most cabs, and he did not see the legs and shoes until his head and shoulders were inside. He started to back out, but a big hand grabbed his shoulder and jerked him in. He recognized Coston's voice. The man said, "Keep coming, Burke." He landed on the floor. He looked up and saw Kraus. The huge man bent and put a hand over Burke's mouth, held him on the floor while the cab went up to Eighth, turned south, then turned right again on Forty-Ninth. The hand came off Burke's mouth and he sat up.

Coston said, "It was nice. You suckered me. With a straight face. Very nice."

Burke said, "Where we going?"

Coston told him. "A nice big vacant lot, over near Twelfth. I though you were old enough to be smart. You should learn a lesson. Kraus will work on you with a sap for awhile. Maybe he can knock some brains into your head. Or out of it. A smart guy."

Burke said, "You're making a mistake, Coston. The fight just went wrong." His insides were all ice, now. He knew what a job Kraus would do on him.

Coston nodded, his face blank, his eyes alive with viciousness. He said, "Sure. You had it figured. You couldn't give it to me straight. You had to be smart."

"I told you what I knew. The guy should beat me. I forgot that I could hit that hard."

"You shouldn't have forgotten. It cost me too much."

Burke said, "It cost me, too. I bet on Malta. Five grand." It had seemed unimportant before. It didn't, now.

Coston was silent for a moment, then he snorted. "Nice. You think fast. I can picture it. You bet the guy then belt him bowlegged. Don't stuff me."

Burke said, "I bet him because I figured him. A business proposition. I bet the way I think I'll fight. I don't fight the way I bet. Two different things. I told you that before the fight. Sometimes I'm wrong. Not often. Sometimes."

Coston said, "Who you bet with?"

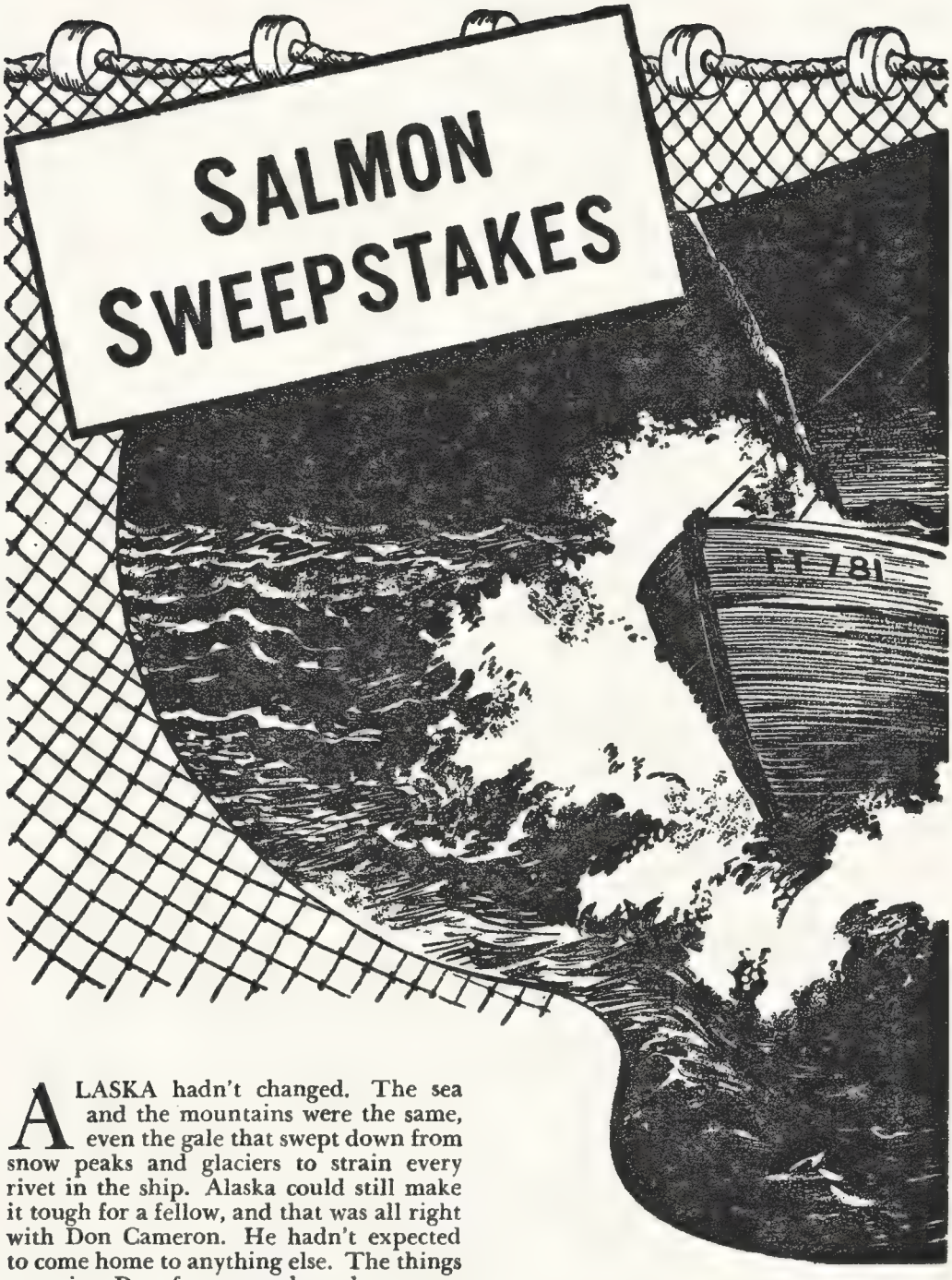
"I gave it to Willy Quigg to lay for me." Quigg was an able gambling man who was very adept at keeping his mouth shut. "I don't know who he placed the bet with. He had dough on Malta, too. He just threw my five in with his money."

Coston said slowly, "Quigg is usually at Riley's after a fight." He considered that. Then he said to the driver, "Take us over to Riley's." He said to Kraus, "Let him sit up," and Burke got up and sat on one of the hinge seats.

THE ride to Riley's took five minutes. It was the longest five minutes Burke had ever spent. Coston said, "We're gettin' a two o'clock train to Chicago. Quigg better be around."

(Continued on page 145)

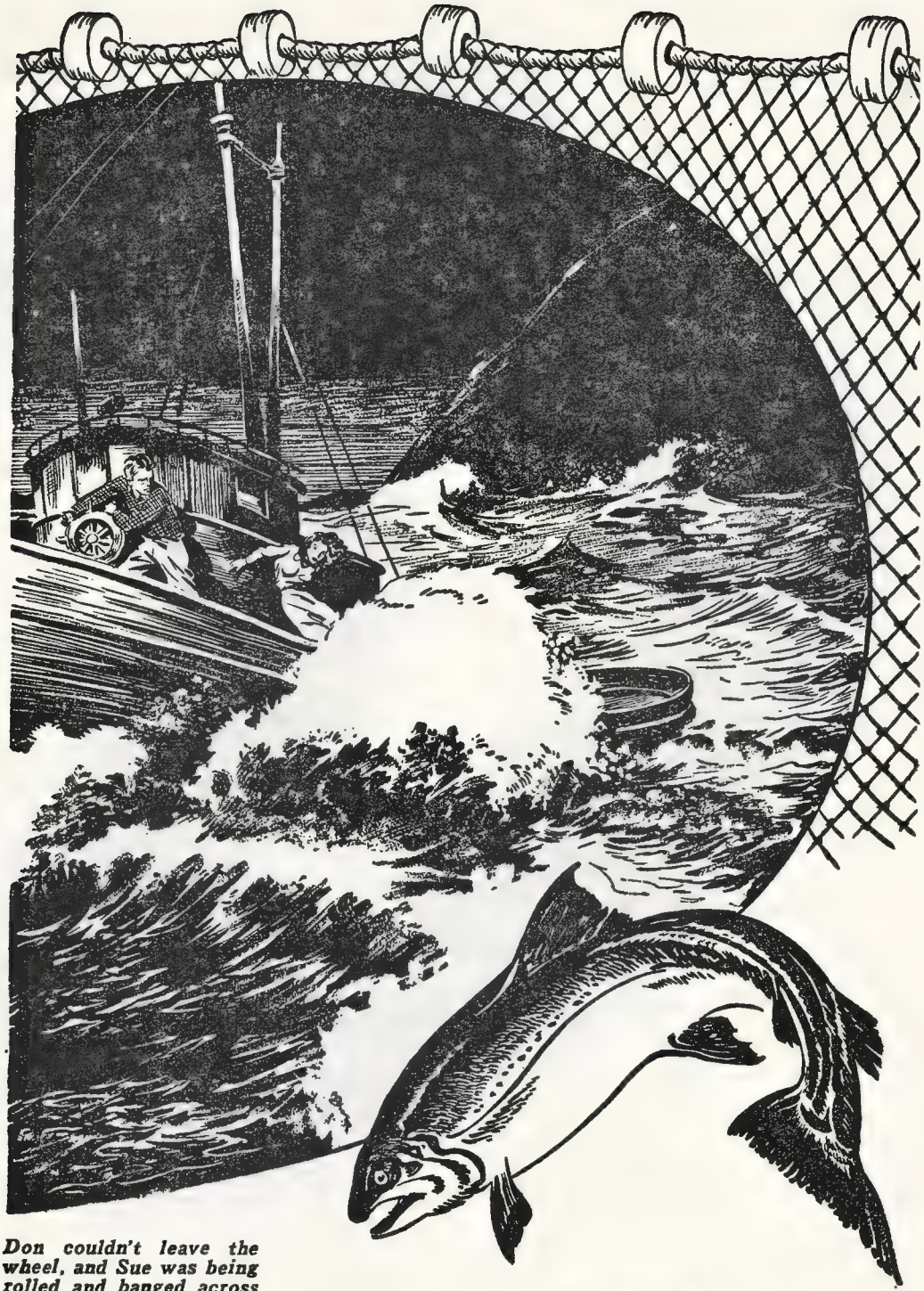
SALMON SWEEPSTAKES



ALASKA hadn't changed. The sea and the mountains were the same, even the gale that swept down from snow peaks and glaciers to strain every rivet in the ship. Alaska could still make it tough for a fellow, and that was all right with Don Cameron. He hadn't expected to come home to anything else. The things worrying Don for more than three years were what men might do, men and a girl.

For a long time, Don realized, he'd rarely thought of Sue, but now he found himself wondering about her. He was surprised to find his hurt anger was gone.

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON



Don couldn't leave the wheel, and Sue was being rolled and banged across the deck behind him.

ILLUSTRATED BY
MONROE EISENBERG

She'd refused to see him or answer his letters and of course she wouldn't remain his wife. All that was in the past, probably the reason he thought now almost entirely of his Chickwan gamble.

In the beginning, late in 1917, Don hadn't considered it a gamble, but now, more than three years later and with a decision only a few hours away, he tied up in knots thinking about it. If he won he'd get at least $25,000 a year. He'd get it for years on end if the pink salmon of Chickwan River were still his, if no one had uncovered his secret.

Don had told only one man, Thad Boyle, about Chickwan. Thad's letters had been few and unsatisfactory but now, as the ship's lines were tossed to the Ketchikan wharf, the little man was pacing the planks, his chin thrust forward belligerently, his white handlebar mustache like the bow wave of a boat.

When they'd shaken hands, hugged each other, Thad stepped back and looked up.

"Bigger," he said. "But age ain't helped your bulldog mug."

"Never mind," Don said. "Spill it. Anybody get Chickwan?"

"Nobody's even smelled it."

Don took a deep breath. Always there had been danger someone would learn how he had cleaned out the river and permitted fish to reach the old spawning grounds, how the runs were building up again. Anyone could have filed on the unoccupied trap site and held it forever. But no one had, and he was back, and he'd won.

To Don the story of the salmon was not a saga, a tale of mystery, romance and tragic immolation. Poets might be inspired and scientists puzzled by the blind return of hundreds of millions to the rivers of their birth and by the bruising struggle to perpetuate and die, but to Don this was as commonplace as the Alaskan mountains looking down on the endless drama. He'd done something to help the salmon and now, being a fisherman and not a poet or a scientist, he would reap the harvest.

"My fish!" he said. "Next year I'll take half a million humpies out of Chickwan. I put those fish in the ocean. They're coming back to me."

Agreement with anyone, even Don, was difficult for Thad. "Damned luck," he said. "If the Indian who saw your boat in the cove— You was crazy, going off and leavin' it that way. All you had to do was file on the site and put in a dummy trap."

Don didn't argue. In the fall of 1917 Thad had been all for filing at once but Don refused. Four successive spawning seasons were necessary to rebuild the Chickwan into what it had been, one of the best pink salmon streams in Southeastern Alaska. Even a dummy trap in Chickwan Cove would have brought a flock of purse seiners and the trap never would have been of value.

"Old lady's got supper cooked," Thad said. "Told me if we was to do any drinkin' it would have to be afterwards."

"I don't need a drink," Don said.

THEY went to the little house where Don had lived since his mother died when he was thirteen. He'd had a reason for asking Mrs. Boyle to take him in as a boarder. Thad was known as the best cannery foreman and machinist in Southeastern Alaska, and the grouchiest, but even then Don had determined to be a fish packer and he wanted to learn all he could about the business. Ketchikan had wondered why so sweet and calm a woman as Mrs. Boyle put up with Thad's temper. She didn't, Don soon learned. Thad's temper was a protective crust so thin it was valueless.

Now she embraced Don, kissed him and frankly wiped her eyes.

"That Army had no right keeping you so long after the war's over," she said.

"Maybe it was my fault," Don said. "I'd always been my own skipper and I couldn't get the idea out of my head."

"Bet you talked back to 'em," Thad said. "And more."

Don nodded and grinned. He'd been stubborn and, being plenty skookum, he'd fought himself into the guardhouse so often he was one of the last to be chosen for the return home.

"Talked yourself out of the two best seasons we ever had," Thad said. "You coulda cleared fifteen thousand purse seining."

It was good to have Thad jawing again and Mrs. Boyle heaping his plate and asking if he had clothes that needed washing. She was the only softening thing that had

entered his life, except in the short weeks he had known Sue Dexter.

"Mrs. Boyle," he said suddenly. "What about Sue?"

With great care she refilled the coffee cups.

"Nothing different than when you went away," she said. "That is, about you being married."

"Married!" he said, jumping up. "You mean—"

He'd been sure of one thing. The Sue he'd known would never have remained his wife, not the girl rushing through life with the speed and vigor and assurance of a spring salmon exploding a school of herring.

Don too had always won and he'd never been afraid to tackle anything new. He'd seen that quality in Sue and he'd liked it. He knew he might not always have fair sailing with such a girl but that hadn't stopped him. Sue may have hit Ketchikan like a flash of northern lights but he had been called the boy wonder of the salmon fishery. He could hold his own.

"Is she still in town?" he asked.

"She went back to living with Nevada Baird," Mrs. Boyle said. "She and Nevada come to town about once a year. It's always in the paper, 'Mrs. Nevada Baird and Mrs. Don Cameron of Tamgas are stopping at the hotel.' "

"What's she letting it lie for?" Don demanded. "Why didn't she get a divorce?"

"She wouldn't have to," Mrs. Boyle said. "Sue being hurt so quick after the wedding, you weren't married all legal. All she need do was ask for an annulment and the court would give it."

"But if she could get out by asking—"

He couldn't understand it, remembering her one letter and her anger. Now, nearly four years later, she was still his wife.

"You're back and know it, so what in hell ever happened?" Thad demanded.

Don didn't answer at once. He had to think it out, recall the sequence of swift events. He had to adjust himself to the fact Sue was still his wife.

"You were up in Ernest Sound," he said. "Mrs. Boyle was sick. I had a purse seining contract in Icy Strait and there wasn't much time. I'd be gone all summer. So at the end of May Sue and I decided to get married."

"You didn't know her when I left," Thad said.

"It was only three weeks after I first saw her. Soon's the preacher finished. we hit for the boat. It was breezing up but we wanted to get to Tamgas. That freak sea hit us off High Point. Sue was thrown across the deck. Broke her leg and cut her face. In three hours we were back in Ketchikan."

He hesitated. He didn't want to say this, but it was what had happened.

"The doc put her to sleep to set the leg," he said. "While I was waiting, another doc told me how bad Mrs. Boyle was. It was blowing harder and nobody'd chance Clarence Strait so I went for Thad. We didn't get back for two days and Sue wouldn't see me. Wouldn't even answer letters I wrote her. The doc said I'd better hold off a while, but I had a crew signed on and that contract. I had to leave."

"Didn't she ever write you?" Mrs. Boyle asked.

"Once. Said she never wanted to see me again. She never did. Wouldn't answer my letters either. Now, still married—"

He shoved his chair back and stood up.

"Let's go downtown," he said gruffly.

He didn't speak as they walked along the planked street. Thad had difficulty keeping abreast.

"Slow bell," he said. "I still got grief to hand you. Did you get more'n the down payment for your purse seiner?"

"No. I wrote but Swanson never answered."

"He took her out in winter when the insurance was off. Hit a pile o' bricks in Clarence Strait one dirty night. He was lost too. How much you out?"

"Five thousand."

"I didn't write you about it," Thad said. "Figured you was having a tough enough time sitting there watching the Rhine."

DON got another jolt when he reached the business section. Ketchikan was a glum town. Friends greeted him warmly but the high spirits and confidence he had always known were gone. The salmon fishery, he learned, had dropped into the blackest depression in its history. Of eighty canneries in Southeastern Alaska the previous season, it was doubtful if thirty would open. Fishermen expected

prices that would scarcely give them a living.

Overfishing during the war boom had depleted the runs too. For the first time Don heard Alaskans doubt fish would return in quantity.

"They're crazy," he said as he bought a drink in the back room of a pool hall. "This is no way to look at it."

"It ain't how you look at it, it's what you see," Thad said. "I been looking all winter for a job but I ain't seen one."

"It's still crazy."

Don felt himself tighten up inside. It was a familiar feeling. He'd had it when he was a kid, fighting a big spring from a rowboat. Men had called him stubborn when he felt like that. Sue had. But he hadn't stopped feeling that way.

"Let's get out of here," he said.

As he turned toward the door he saw a face that was vaguely familiar. The man was watching him and when he caught Don's eye he called, "How are you, Cameron? Glad to see you back."

As Don shook hands he remembered it was Ash Moulton. The man was even bigger than Don and he wasn't like the fishermen at the bar. He wore good clothes and had the easy air of cities rather than of a fishing town.

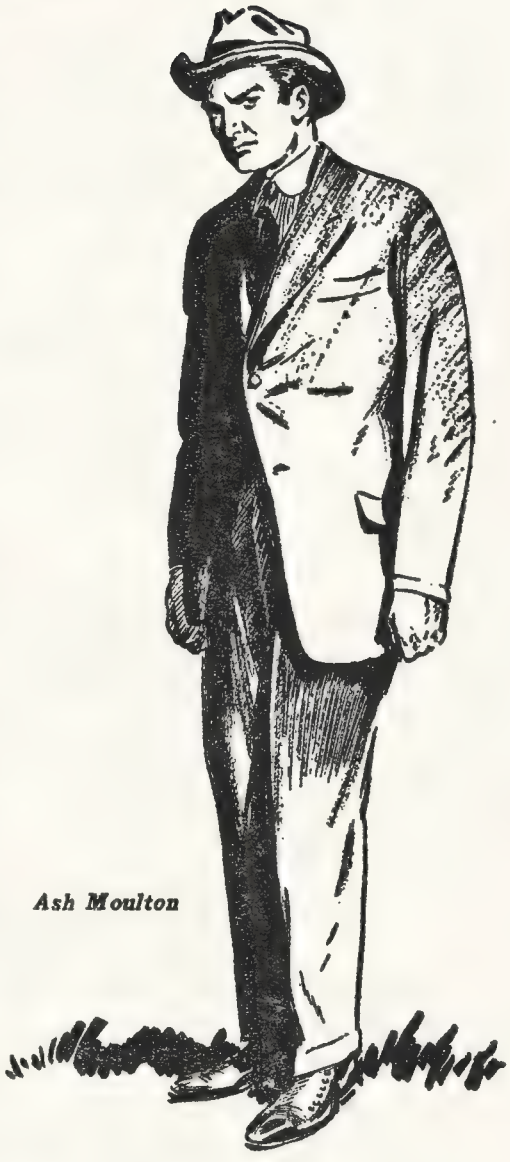
"You still packing fish in Clarence Strait?" Don asked.

"That's ancient history," Ash said. "We spread to two more canneries in the war boom. The old man kept plowing the profits back. I didn't like it but he stuck to it until he died last summer. Then wham! What a licking I had to take. I was lucky to pull our newest plant, at Sukoi Bay, out of the wreck."

Don had seen Ash Moulton only a few times. Ash's father was a successful packer who'd moved up from Puget Sound before the war. Ash had come in 1917, Don's last season. He'd been to college and had a reputation as a football player and Don had sold him some seine fish. You had to watch your weather, Don remembered. Ash claimed fish weren't fresh, trying to crowd down the price, though he scarcely knew the difference between a sockeye and a humpback.

"You opening Sukoi Bay?" Don asked, thinking it was the nearest cannery to Chickwan Cove.

"This isn't getting me down," Ash said.



Ash Moulton

"I'm still in there pitching that football. No other cannery near Sukoi Bay. It's the trap owners and fishermen who'll have to watch out. I'll pay my own price for fish."

Ash was confident and aggressive.

"You're a damned fool to talk tough like that," Don said. "I'm a fisherman."

"No tougher than the situation. It's every man for himself, and I'm not taking another licking."

Don let it go at that. The man didn't use the Alaskan language.

"Come on, Thad," Don said. "I want to see a feller."

"That Ash is smart," Thad said when they were outside.

"He's got no doubts about himself," Don said.

"Smart, I tell you. When the old man died they had three canneries, new tenders, a few traps. They got hit hard as anybody, but here Ash pops up with a two-line plant clear of debt and enough money to keep going."

"What of it? Know anybody who'll loan us a gasboat?"

"What you want it for?"

"I might as well find out the worst of everything right off. I'm going to Tamgas and talk to Sue."

CHAPTER II

ONE ON THE HOUSE

DON was at the wheel next day when they rounded a point and had the little fishing village of Tamgas before them. A few stores and other buildings faced the bay, behind a planked street. Houses were strung along the shore and some spread up a draw between two mountains. Don remembered how Sue had described one of those houses and had planned to have it ready when he returned from fishing. He'd believed a lot of things then.

The bay widened and to the right Don saw a cannery. He'd never been in Tamgas and Ash had said Sukoi Bay was alone in the district.

"Who owns that plant?" Don asked.

"No telling who owns any plant this year," Thad said. "George Lewis built it two years ago, mostly on borrowed money. Last fall he couldn't buy a drink."

A dozen purse seiners and many trolling boats were at anchor in the bay or moored to two long floats running out from shore. Don found a hole, made the lines fast and asked a fisherman where Mrs. Baird lived. The man pointed to a large house above the town. "But this time o' afternoon she's always in the back room of The Mug Up," he said.

That suited Don. Sue would be alone. He asked about her.

"She left in the *Westward* last week. Ain't back yet."

"Come on," Don said to Thad. "I'm not wasting this trip."

He had never seen Nevada Baird but he had heard of her. Everyone in Alaska had. She had owned an interest in one of the earliest canneries nearly forty years before and she'd kept a finger, and often a whole arm, in the salmon fishery ever since. Because of her success in a hard tough game, Don expected a large woman who could handle a tender's lines if she had to. No such person was in the back room of The Mug Up, a restaurant, and Don and Thad sat at a table in a corner.

A few men were drinking beer and fishing salmon. A young woman sat at one table and at a window was an old lady with white bobbed hair. She wore a black silk dress with lace at collar and cuffs and was talking to a fisherman.

Don looked up expectantly when the door opened but the newcomers were two men. They walked to a table in the center. At once a woman's voice, full and positive, called, "Charley!"

A man in a cook's apron came from the restaurant and looked at the little old lady by the window.

"Who's your steadiest customer?" she asked.

"You," Charley said. "Why?"

"Then choose between me and that scum."

Charley looked at the new arrivals and said nothing.

"I won't sit in the same room with thieves and fish pirates!" the woman exclaimed. "It's bad enough living in the same town with Sockeye Sam Agnew and that dogfish he's got in tow, but I don't have to look at 'em over a glass of beer and I don't intend to."

"I'm running a public place, Nevada," Charley said. "Can't throw anybody out 'less they start throwing chairs first."

Don looked in amazement at the little old lady. She stood up, her eyes bright.

"If I ran a place and any damned sneakin', crawlin', slimy fish pirate stuck his nose in the door, he'd get it shot off," she said.

"Aw, shut up, grandma!" one of the newcomers said. "You bought plenty o' pirated fish when you ran a cannery."

"We had no pirates when I packed fish, Sockeye. Alaska was a clean place till you thieving crooks—"

"Go sit down!" Sockeye roared. "Charley, bring some beer."

A huge man walked across the room and placed two hams of hands on Sockeye's table.

"They ain't no law against me throwin' you out," he said in a mild Norse voice. "You ready to be throwed?"

The smile was sweet on his broad face and his blue eyes were those of a child. Sockeye looked up appraisingly, his hands moving to the table edge. Don knew what that meant. He'd tip the table against the big man, yank off a leg and go to work.

But the big man, still smiling, grasped a wrist and jerked Sockeye and table toward him. His other hand, open, smacked Sockeye on the side of the face. It was like hitting a warehouse door with a two-by-four, full swing. Sockeye was knocked to the floor at Nevada Baird's feet. She looked down without change of expression while the big man picked Sockeye up, opened a window and tossed him out. When he turned for the other, the fellow had gone.

"Thanks, Halmar," Nevada Baird said. "Charley, bring Halmar a drink, and all the rest too."

Halmar grinned sheepishly and went back to his table. Nevada sat down and began talking quietly to the old fisherman.

"She ain't calmed any," Thad said.

DON stared at the woman across the room. When the old fisherman left he went to her table.

"Thanks for the beer," he said. "I'm Don Cameron."

She looked at him, her eyes probing swiftly.

"Sit down," she said. "You're a lot huskier but not handsome like your dad."

"I wouldn't know," Don said. "He died when I was a kid."

"You got the same red in your hair but not the nose and mouth. Or eyes! What they could do to a woman! What's on your mind?"

"You know."

"How should I?"

He felt hostility, or at least caution, and it nettled him.

"If you're not talking, all right," he said. "But you can tell me where I'll find Sue."

She rubbed her hands as if washing them.

"That's what I did of the whole business," she said. "Rule o' mine. Never mess in other people's affairs."

"You messed in Charley's," Don said.

"That was my business. Tamgas has filled up with fish pirates since the depression set in and I own four traps."

"All right. Where's Sue?"

"Visiting in Juneau. What you botherin' her for?"

"Bothering her!" Don said. "Hasn't a man a right to ask his wife what in hell she intends to do about being that?"

Mrs. Baird looked at him steadily, then smiled.

"Sure he has," she said. "When'd you get back?"

"Yesterday."

"You didn't waste time. I don't know whether Sue—but there's too many people here. Come up to the house."

She rose and walked to the door. Don hesitated, then nodded to Thad and followed. Nevada Baird was buying a half dozen quarts of beer. She handed them to Don.

"Who's this?" she said when they were outside.

"Thad Boyle," Don said. "It's all right."

"I'm particular what I say in public."

Don stopped. "I've lived with Thad and his wife since I was thirteen," he said. "He knows all about me and he'll keep on knowing."

"Got a mind and speak it, eh? He always like this, Thad?"

"Any way he is, he's got a right to be," Thad said.

Her eyes sparkled. "Too bad you two don't like each other better," she said. "Let's get going."

She was silent as she led the way to her home up the draw. When they entered, Don hesitated at the living room door. It was a big room, well furnished, and he had a strong impression of Sue's personality there. He waited uneasily while Mrs. Baird got glasses and opened bottles.

"All I want to know, Mrs. Baird—" he began, but she stopped him.

"I haven't been married for so long I don't figure I'm entitled to the 'Missus' any longer," she said. "And I certainly ain't a 'Miss.' So it'll have to be Nevada,

like it is to every kid in Tamgas. Unless you like Idaho better."

"I never heard but the Nevada," Thad said.

"And I never been sure I missed Idaho, though Pa was careful about such things. Our family sounded like a geography, starting in Illinois."

Don grinned. "All right, Nevada," he said. "What I want to know is how I stand. I never knew till yesterday that Sue's been my wife all this time."

"What you want to do about it?"

Don didn't answer at once.

"She's the one who's done everything," he said. "Now—what do I know about her?"

"What'd you know in the first place. Two weeks!"

"Three," he said, "and I thought I knew plenty then."

The memory of those weeks came back as they hadn't in a long while. Until then Don hadn't given much heed to girls. He was always fishing, hadn't the time, but he'd heard of Sue Dexter.

All Ketchikan had, soon after she'd come from Tamgas to go to high school. It wasn't that she was wild. There'd been no hint of that. She was just alive and vivid. She'd been the first girl to climb the mountain back of town, the first to put on skis. When her little feet clicked on the planks of the main street fishermen forgot fish, businessmen forgot business and wives thought of a youth they had hoped for and had never known. Sue Dexter fitted the vital, exuberant spirit of a frontier town that always saw blue skies through the rains that swept it so furiously.

Don had been unimpressed until that rainy day in May, 1917, when Nels Larsen had called to him from the shelter of a store canopy. Two girls were with Nels but later Don knew he had looked at only one. She wore oilskins and a sou'wester, black and shiny and dripping water, and beneath the protecting brim was the loveliest face he had ever seen. He remembered little sprays of brown hair crowding out from under the hat, cheeks rosy in the cold wet wind, and gray-blue eyes whose level look seemed to ask, "Are you strong enough?" Don had stood staring at her, dumb, feeling as if he'd taken a big drink of liquor.

HE THOUGHT of all this while Nevada took a long drink of beer.

"Sue was sixteen then," she said. "How old were you?"

"Twenty."

"And he'd been a growed man for five years," Thad said.

Nevada ignored that but Thad thrust out his mustache.

"Don't get uppish!" he exclaimed. "Any kid that starts trolling when he's twelve and has a thousand dollars saved when he finishes high school and puts it into a gas troller and is high boat his second year off Ommaney and then buys a purse seiner and takes a hundred and eighty thousand fish his first year—what I mean is, when a kid starts that way and winds up with five figures on his bank book before he can vote, he's run a shoestring into something, and if you don't know it, who should?"

Nevada was impressed. "Well, well!" she said. "Only, if he's so good in a boat, why'd he smash her up in one?"

"Sue was all for going," Don said. "She was always wanting everything right now. I told her it was breezing up but we was in a hurry to get to Tamgas."

"Which makes it her fault."

"I never said that. I was as anxious to get to Tamgas as she was. We had only ten days before I'd leave for Icy Strait and it would be fall before I'd get back. She was going to fix up a house. We was talking about it when we headed past High Point and it was my fault, not watching, when that sea hit us."

He stopped, thinking of how he couldn't leave the wheel and Sue was being rolled and banged across the deck behind him.

He'd caught her with one foot and held her until he could get back to quiet water. He remembered how he'd seen her face smeared with blood and how scared he'd been.

"I never knew how bad that cut was," Don said. "She wouldn't see me before I had to leave and the only time she wrote she didn't say. She was too busy telling me she'd never see me again."

"The cut wasn't much," Nevada said. "You can hardly see a scar. Didn't you . . . ?"

"But why wouldn't she see me? She must have told you."

"If she'd tried, I wouldn't let her. Talk your troubles over and they do you no good. Which is what troubles are for."

"I'm not talking about mine," Don said hotly. "I only want to know if I'm married or not and why. Sue could cut herself loose any time by asking for an annulment."

"If any asking's to be done, I got to do it," Nevada said. "I'm her legal guardian."

Don jumped up. "What sort of game is this?" he demanded.

Nevada had a peculiar way of remaining unruffled. "No game," she said. "Ran a rowboat into a purse seiner, did you? Never quit for anything, even a spit of a girl."

"But she sent word—"

"Why'm I wasting time on a man who takes 'No' from a woman? Did you tear off any hospital doors?"

Don felt he was being put off and he wanted to get this finished. "If Sue wants an annulment, why don't you give it to her?" he asked angrily.

Nevada looked at him without resentment. "That's fair," she said. "You've got an answer coming, but it'll take a little talking. I've lived a long while, caught and packed a lot of fish and seen a lot of people, all kinds. I've seen 'em get ahead and seen 'em mess their lives up bad. I messed up my own and, if you want to know, it was by being bullheaded and marrying too young. Out of all that I've learned one thing—you can't tell people how to live. Living's a school where it's all learning and no teaching."

She poured herself another glass of beer.

"I used to be loaded with advice, down to the scuppers," she said, "but I never did anybody a bit o' good with it. When Sue came—she was only two—I made up my mind there'd be no teaching, no telling her to stay away from a red-hot stove or a sharp knife."

"Musta had to lash your hands behind you," Thad said.

"I've lived down that reputation," she said. "Trouble with Sue, she learned the rules but never got the idea behind 'em. Stoves were all cold and knives all dull. Till she bumped into Don."

"And you was caught with no switches cut," Thad said.

"Was I!" Nevada cried. "The biggest spring you ever saw on a hand line couldn't raise the hell that girl did. Ripping around, breaking water, sounding, demanding I get an annulment—that stove was sure red-hot. But I told her she'd picked her lesson and she'd stick till she learned it. No annulment. She'd got herself into this and she could get herself out."

She looked at Don but she wasn't seeing him. "Next time Sue'll be old enough to know what she's doing," she said.

Don stood up. "I had nothing to do with your system," he said.

"You jumped into it," Nevada said. "Found yourself a hot stove."

Her face was no longer round and soft and Don understood how this little old lady had managed to stay in the fishing game nearly forty years.

"You look like you say a thing only once," he said. "Come along, Thad."

Nevada followed them to the door. "Sue'll be twenty-one this fall," she said. "She can walk into court on her birthday and ask for all the annulments she wants. Don, being twenty-four, can do it tomorrow."

Don didn't look back. He'd never thought of that but he was sick of the whole mess. They went down to the gasboat and started back to Ketchikan.

"What's your next move?" Thad asked.

"Build a trap," Don said.

"I mean this Sue business."

"To hell with that. I'm a fisherman. I'm going to get me some fish."

CHAPTER III

A LICENSE TO STEAL

DON gathered a crew and left town a couple of days later. He took Thad and they handlogged spruce logs five feet thick and a hundred feet long for the pot and spiller frame, smaller timber for the hearts and cedar for lead floats. Back in Ketchikan, Don paid the Forest Service, paid off his crew. He felt fine now. He'd never been idle so long and was glad to be at work if it was only swinging an ax and a saw.

Thad wasn't happy. "I don't like this ax business," he said. "I'm going to make a last try for a cannery job."

A little man sat in a chair tilted against the wall.

Don went up to the house. He had Chickwan now, and he'd build a trap. This depression wouldn't last. Alaska and the salmon would come back.

The Boyle home was silent. Mrs. Boyle hadn't expected them, he thought, and after he'd washed up in the kitchen he went into the living room.

A little man sat in a chair tilted against the wall. He was dressed in a tight-fitting black suit and seemed to be asleep. Don saw a letter on the table. It was for him and he opened it.

"If you're the boss of this stable," the stranger said, "I'm in the wrong stall."

"What you talking about?" Don asked.

"What kind of place is this where they don't lock doors?"

"What'd they lock 'em for?"

The man's lids still covered his eyes. His face was like a mummy's and as lacking in expression. His age might be anything between forty and sixty.

"Dips, yeggs, porch climbers," he said. "Even a track dick would try his hand in a hick town like this."

Don understood little of that. He read his letter.

"Know a guy named Thad Boyle?" the little man asked.

"He lives here," Don said.

"Ain't seen him for twenty years. What's he do?"

"He's the best cannery foreman in Southeast."

The strange eyelids jerked slightly and when the little man spoke his hard voice had a touch of warmth.

"He always was crazy about machines. So he's sitting pretty, eh?"

"Not this year. No work for him."

"Him and me both."

Don understood now. This was Marty Boyle, Thad's brother. Don had heard of him for years, how he'd never worked, had spent all his time going from one race track to another and betting on horses. "He'll be starving some day," Thad was always saying, "and I'll have to care for him." Don wondered how Thad would take it when he came home and found his prediction had come true.

"Thad eating?" Marty asked.

"While I've got a dollar."

Marty's lids lifted slightly but he did not speak. Don picked up the local paper. The news was gloomy. Halibut men were doing all right but no one in the salmon fishery had hope. Don heard feet pounding on the front steps and Thad threw open the door.

"I knew it!" he shouted. "Told you in 'Seventeen to file on that site. I knew—"

He stopped when he saw his brother.

"Holy humdurgeon!" he exclaimed. "So you finally showed up. Shriveled some, but the old lady will take care of that. Make yourself to home."

Thad shook hands hastily and whirled to Don, grasping the paper and pointing to a small item on the back page.

"Look at that!" he said. "Look at it!"

Don leaned forward, and as he read his body froze. He stopped breathing. He felt that his heart had stopped beating. A fish trap license for Chickwan Cove had been issued to Ash Moulton.

"The damned crook!" Thad said. He was so angry his voice was a scream. "All the time I've been in Alaska, I never heard of a dirty trick like that."

Don, still leaning forward, rolled the paper into a rope and pulled it to bits.

"The damned crook!" Thad said again.

"What you expect of a bird from Puget Sound where the pinks run only in the odd years?" Don asked savagely.

"Run?" Marty Boyle said. "What's pinks?"

"They ain't horses," Thad said. "But you can go just as broke on 'em, like Don here."

Don leaned forward, and as he read his body froze.

"What kind o' bet he make?"

Don didn't hear. He was still dazed, and sick.

"Those Surprise Passage Indians in my crew," he said. "Jimmy John was the best of 'em. Got 'em to save their money in 'Seventeen. Said Ash Moulton had promised 'em an engine and seine if they got enough for a hull. So they had to sell their fish to Ash."

"And talked," Thad said. "The one that came in the cove got hep to what you were doing."

DON didn't think it was as simple as that. He'd gone back to his purse seiner, anchored in the cove, after he'd blown out the jam in the river, and he'd found where a rowboat had been beached near his own. Fresh tracks told that the man hadn't gone inland and Don hadn't worried much. An Indian wouldn't guess what he was doing. If he did, he'd have talked sooner.

"It was Jimmy John," Don said. "Always gabbing. He said something lately and Ash pulled it out of him."

He stood up. He had to have some release, and he knew there could be only one. He got his hat and when he opened the door Thad followed. Downtown, they waited in front of the hotel where Ash Moulton lived.

Soon Ash came up from the waterfront. He was smiling, and he walked with the quick, free stride of an athlete.

"You cheap thief," Don said, and stepped in front of him.

Ash stopped, looked quickly around.

"You've got traps," Don said. "You've got a cannery and money. Sitting prettier'n most packers. No need for you to steal. But after somebody else does the work and earns a trap site you've got to get your dirty hands on it. Maybe you—"

Ash swung, so suddenly Don could not duck quickly enough, so hard that even the glancing blow spun Don off his feet. He rolled over and up.

"You can have all that you want," he said. "But first I've got some things to say while you can still hear."

A crowd had gathered. "What's all this?" a man asked.

"I'm telling it," Don said.

"He's only squawking," Ash said. "I heard the Chickwan run was building up so I got a trap license. It was open to anybody."

"You're lying," Don said. "I opened up the Chickwan three years ago last fall. Worked a month cleaning out the river. An Indian told this cheap crook I'd been there and he—"

"To hell with all this!" Ash shouted. "I got the license legally. This guy's nuts."

He turned as if that ended the matter. Don leaped, jerked Ash around. Ash whirled, swinging, and Don was caught off balance. He reeled away, partly stunned, but his rage wasn't hurt. It carried him in, and he didn't swing. He punched straight, head down. That's how Ash caught him again, with a vicious cross, and when Don went to his knees Ash battered his face.

A policeman, who'd been watching indifferently, stepped in. He was bigger than Ash, had to be to handle fishermen.

"Arrest that bum!" Ash said. "I'm entitled to protection."

"You hit him first," the cop said.

Don stood up. His face was bloody.

"I'll get that trap back, Moulton," he said. "After I get it I'll get your cannery. I'll get your boats and gear. Then I'll get you. I'll put you in a ship bound out of Alaska, and the purser'll think he's taking on a load of raw beef."

He walked away. Thad followed.

"You took on a hell of a contract," Thad said.

Don knew he had. He'd done it on impulse, but he still had the impulse.

"I'll fill it," he said.

They went home. Before they opened the door they heard Mrs. Boyle laughing. Marty sat in the kitchen.

"Your brother—" she began, and saw Don's face, but she wasn't disturbed until she learned who'd done it.

"Why didn't you spoil his mug?" she demanded. "Ash ought to be run out of town. Worst chaser in Ketchikan. Nice girls, too."

Don wasn't interested in that. He washed his face and ate supper. Mrs. Boyle had never heard of Chickwan and wanted to know all about it. Thad told her.

"Mean he was betting what he'd done against twenty-five or thirty thousand a year?" Marty asked. "Some odds."

"You and your bangtails," Thad said.

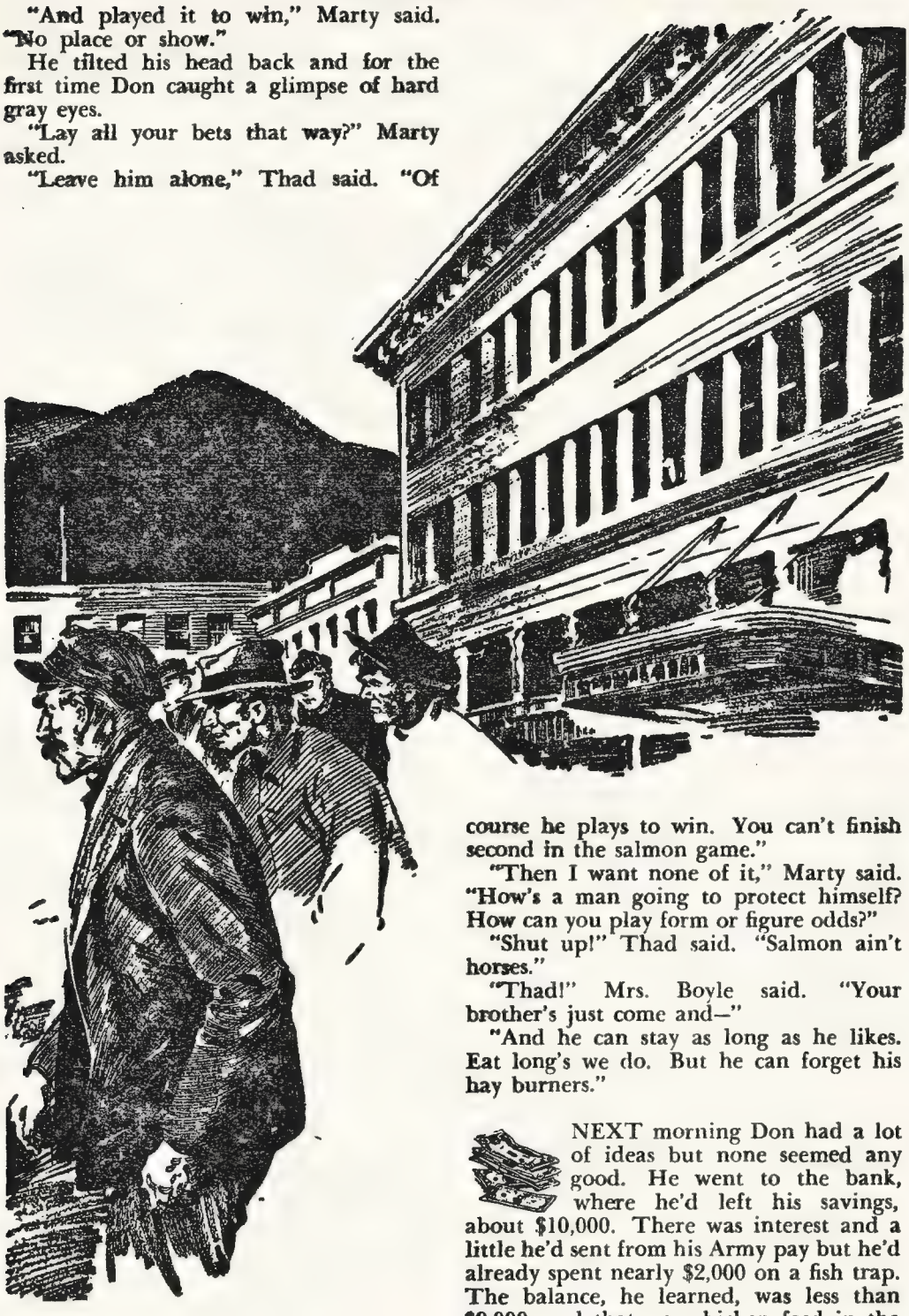
Don's rage carried him in—and he punched straight, head down.

"And played it to win," Marty said. "No place or show."

He tilted his head back and for the first time Don caught a glimpse of hard gray eyes.

"Lay all your bets that way?" Marty asked.

"Leave him alone," Thad said. "Of course he plays to win. You can't finish second in the salmon game."



"Then I want none of it," Marty said. "How's a man going to protect himself? How can you play form or figure odds?"

"Shut up!" Thad said. "Salmon ain't horses."

"Thad!" Mrs. Boyle said. "Your brother's just come and—"

"And he can stay as long as he likes. Eat long's we do. But he can forget his hay burners."

NEXT morning Don had a lot of ideas but none seemed any good. He went to the bank, where he'd left his savings, about $10,000. There was interest and a little he'd sent from his Army pay but he'd already spent nearly $2,000 on a fish trap. The balance, he learned, was less than $9,000, and that was chicken feed in the salmon game. He might buy a purse

seiner but there'd be no money fishing now, and no chance to take a crack at Ash.

"We're going to Tamgas again," he said to Thad. "Some trap owners there. Maybe I can sell my timber."

They arrived late in the afternoon and went to The Mug Up. Nevada Baird sat at the window. Don went to her table.

"You've got four traps," he said. "I've got trap timber near here. You can save money."

"I built my traps new last year and the year before," Nevada said. "How do you happen to have trap timber?"

"I cut it," Don said.

"And a fish packer wouldn't advance money for webbing and cable, eh? Times are tough."

"I've got money to build a trap."

"Then build it. You may not clear anything this year but you'll be all set for next season. Me, I'm doing all right. Four traps and two purse seiners—I'll take five hundred thousand fish and make a little money."

"Not if you sell at Sukoi Bay," Don said.

"I can handle Ash," she said. "He's got to have my fish if he puts up seventy thousand cases."

Don sat very still. He rubbed the bruises on his face to cover any change in his expression. Here was his chance.

"Know anybody who needs trap timber?" he asked.

"No," she said.

He nodded to Thad and they went out, down the street to the cannery. Don found the watchman.

"Somebody's thinking of buying," Don said.

The doors were opened and they were left alone.

"Who's buying?" Thad asked.

"Look it over," Don said. "You've got a job."

"You and Nevada, eh?"

"Me and nobody else. I'll have a look outside."

Don came back half an hour later. Thad was scowling.

"What's the matter with it?" Don asked.

"Everything was put away in fine shape," Thad said. "Machines all the latest model the can company has. But holy humdurgeon, kid! It's only a one-line plant. I know four tow-line plants you can get for fifteen thousand. They cost five times that two-three years ago."

"I'm buying this plant," Don said. "List everything. The watchman can tell you what George Lewis owns. There's three good purse seines and a new purse seiner. Find out about 'em. I'm seeing Nevada and then we're getting back to Ketchikan."

Nevada was still in The Mug Up and Don sat at her table.

"This is business," he said. "Will you hold off selling your fish for two weeks? I want to bid on them."

She studied Don.

"Somebody mauled you up a bit," she said. "Must have been a skookum gent. Two weeks? It's a bargain."

Don went out. Nevada had four traps and two purse seiners. They'd take at least half a million fish, enough to give him 30,000 cases. He'd be sure to get other fish, might put up 40,000.

And if he got Nevada's fish he'd wreck Ash Moulton.

He thought of all this and a lot more as he hurried through the restaurant, but at the door he stopped short. A girl was on the sidewalk. Her back was toward him but he knew her instantly. After nearly four years he remembered—her hair, the way she carried her head, the way she stood. He waited for her to turn. He wanted to see her face.

But she didn't turn. Ash Moulton was coming across the street from the waterfront. Sue waited, and Don knew how she looked. She'd waited for him like that, head up, eyes level, maybe smiling a little, but always making you come to her.

Ash stopped on the sidewalk. He was laughing, and Don admitted he was a handsome brute. He had an aggressive, confident air but Sue wasn't knuckling under. She turned and she was still keeping the upper hand with cool assurance. Don stared through the glass. She was beautiful, and she was his wife.

They walked away, talking and laughing easily, as if they'd known and liked each other a long while. Don stared until she was out of sight. This wasn't the girl he'd married nearly four years ago. She'd grown up. Don's heart was pounding, and his rage bloomed.

"To hell with all that," he said, and he went down the street to the cannery.

HE AND Thad returned to Ketchikan late that night, Thad arguing all the way against buying the Tamgas cannery. But next morning Don found George Lewis, and found him ready to sell at most any price. They agreed on $10,000, half in cash, the remainder in a year. The three seines and a purse seiner were included.

Don hunted up the can company representative and had no trouble arranging for rental of the machinery. After all, it was in place and Don might make a few dollars. Getting cans on the cuff was something else. The company wanted assurances of broker loans.

"Enos Slocum's up from Seattle," the can man said. "Looking for pinks to fill out a brand he's pushing."

But Slocum didn't want anything to do with Don or Tamgas. Don was too young, had no experience. What if the runs were bad? Who knew how low the price of canned salmon would go next fall? There never'd been a year when risks in the salmon fishery were so great. Besides, the Moulton cannery was only three miles away. Ash was a smart packer with a good plant. He had capital. If the runs were poor, he'd still get enough fish and Don would be smashed flat.

But Enos Slocum had never encountered the true fisherman's passion. Don fought with the fury he'd matched against a fifty-pound spring when he was twelve. He claimed Nevada Baird's fish, and he didn't feel he was lying. He had the best cannery foreman in the business. He had friends among the purse seiners. He'd get more fish than he could handle.

He won. Slocum agreed to guarantee the can payment and advance twenty thousand. Before the day was over, all arrangements had been made with the can company and the cans would be shipped at once. Money would be deposited in the Ketchikan bank after Slocum returned to Seattle.

Don found Thad. "We're packing fish," he said.

"I thought you'd do it," Thad said, "so I been rounding up my old crew. How about supplies?"

Don was familiar with canneries but he'd never put one in operation, did not know the details, all the items needed. Not until the end of the third day did he begin to get a clear picture or realize how valuable Thad Boyle was.

"A cent a case," Don said. "That's your bonus."

"Holy humdurgeon!" Thad said. "You ain't even got a can yet, or a fish to put in it."

"A cent."

They went to Tamgas. Thad and his crew worked on the machinery. The cans came unexpectedly, diverted from a plant that at the last moment had failed to open. Food and other supplies arrived from Ketchikan. Don had no time to see Nevada Baird. He scarcely thought of Sue until he found himself facing her on the street. Both stopped.

"Hello, Don," she said.

She didn't smile, just stood looking at him—curiously, he thought.

"Hello," he said, and waited.

He felt she was a stranger, someone he'd never seen before. She no longer had the glowing prettiness of sixteen. That had been only a promise of what had come.

"I've wanted to free you," she said, "but I couldn't. I can't until September."

"I can wait a little longer," he said gruffly.

"There's another thing," she said. "The allotment the government sent me. It's in a bank in Ketchikan. Every cent."

"It's yours. Uncle Sam gave it to you."

"Twenty dollars each month. The other ten was yours. And I won't touch any of it. Not a penny."

She had flared, but not in the old way. The impetuous nature was still there but under control.

"I'll send you a check for it," Sue said. "Where'll you be?"

"In Tamgas, but you'll only waste ink."

"In Tamgas! All summer?"

"And a lot more summers."

She looked at him coolly for a moment and then went on. He had an idea she wouldn't see him next time, and he found himself wishing very much that she would. Not the Sue he had married but this girl who had just spoken to him.

He was thinking of this when he entered the post office and met Ash Moulton coming out.

"Hello," Ash said good-naturedly. "After your mail?"

"What's it to you?" Don demanded.

"Nothing," and Ash grinned. "I was just hoping you have good news."

Don received a bundle of letters and as he walked back to the cannery he sorted them. One was from the broker, Enos Slocum, and he tore it open.

Slocum had withdrawn his loan. No money would be deposited in a Ketchikan bank for Don. Without money he couldn't buy a fish to put in his cans. He couldn't go on.

As Don read the letter a second time he remembered Ash Moulton's grin. So that was it. Ash knew the letter was coming.

CHAPTER IV

PLACE YOUR BETS

TEN days later Don came boiling up from Seattle. He hadn't raised a dollar and he'd proved that Ash Moulton was back of Enos Slocum's refusal to advance money.

"Sure Ash came to see me," Slocum had said. "I'd already advanced him forty thousand and he told me the set-up. How you didn't have Nevada Baird's fish like you claimed. One of you is going under and I'd be a fool to back you both. Besides, Ash has everything in his favor and you've got nothing."

Don saw other brokers. They'd been badly hit in the crash, didn't know how soon the industry would recover, and none was advancing money to a kid who'd never packed a fish.

In Tamgas, Don went at once to the cannery office. Marty Boyle sat in a chair tilted against the wall. He seemed to be asleep and as Don opened his mail Nevada Baird came in.

"Saw you get off the boat," she said. "Your two weeks are long gone."

"I've been in Seattle," Don said.

He'd have to tell her two years wouldn't help him.

"I never talk business with strangers around," she said.

"You and me both, lady," Marty said, and went out.

"Who's that?" Nevada asked. "Blind or just pretending?"

"I'm not bidding for your fish," Don said.

Nevada was about to sit down but she turned.

"That's putting me in a sweet hole," she said hotly. "I've been holding Ash off to give you a chance."

"Ash could have told you."

Her bright little eyes studied him.

"Slocum, eh?" she said. "And now Ash has this district to himself. That'll cost me plenty unless I can get some canner to make a long haul. How much capital did you have?"

"Practically none."

"And you were going to stand me up for thirty thousand dollars' worth of fish."

"You'd have been paid," Don said. "Soon's I started packing, Slocum would have let me have more money. He backed me on the cans. They're upstairs now. He couldn't crawl out of that."

"What good are cans if you've got no fish to put in 'em? And how you going to pay your white crew? And for supplies? You must be in debt for the rest of your life."

Don hadn't been thinking of anything else.

"Damned fool idea, opening this plant in the first place!" Nevada exclaimed. "You never had a chance."

"I had the best kind of chance and you knew it or you wouldn't have thought of selling me your fish."

"Now Ash has me over a barrel. He'll use a heavy paddle."

Mention of Ash brought full realization of how complete Ash's victory was, and Don wasn't taking it.

"You don't have to let Ash keep you down," he said. "Your fish will more than fill my cans."

"And you want me to gamble my fish with a green packer."

"Your fish and fifteen thousand cash."

For a moment Nevada was breathless.

"Nothing keeps you from trying."

"I'm not asking for a loan," Don said. "I'm asking you to put up your fish and cash with my plant and supplies and cans. We'll split all profits for the season."

"No."

Don stood up. He'd always stood when fishing. He couldn't think sitting down, and he couldn't fight.

"Look what you're up against," he said. "Ash can pay you what he wants. Two cents a fish means you lose ten thousand dollars. More if the run's good. And we wouldn't get just your fish. There's other

traps and purse seiners. We could fill forty thousand cases with this crew. Look where you'd come out. An extra ten thousand for your fish and half the profits."

"If I've learned anything in forty years it's to stay off fish packing when times are bad."

"Not being able to fill his cans is what wrecks a packer," Don said. "We'd have a fine set-up. With your fish, we'd be sure of thirty thousand cases." He knew it would work but he hesitated before he said, "And without your fish, Ash is sunk."

Nevada looked up angrily.

"So that's it!" she said. "Chickwan."

"What d' you mean?"

"You want to use my fish and my money to get even with Ash."

"What do you care so long's you make money?" Don demanded. "And you'll keep Ash from robbing you."

"I wouldn't make money. You're too mad to see straight. You've even gone wrong on Chickwan."

"How do you mean, wrong?"

"Those runs won't come back," Nevada said. "I know. I had a hunch on that creek ten years ago."

That looked like putting in an oar for Ash.

"Meaning Ash isn't a thief because there was nothing to steal," Don said. "His getting Slocum to renege on my loan was to save me money. Play along with him if you like that kind."

He sat down at the desk and opened more letters. One, postmarked Tamgas, contained a blank sheet of paper and a check for $1,151.40. It was signed "Sue Cameron."

"Tell Sue what I'm doing," he said, and tore the check to shreds.

"I'll bet you were a good driving fisherman," she said. "But packing fish is something else."

SHE went out. Don had seen a chance there, but he knew now he'd only been grabbing at the last bush as he slipped off the cliff. And Nevada had been using him to force Ash to a higher price.

Thad Boyle came in with Marty.

"We're ahead o' time," Thad said happily. "Started making cans yesterday."

"Stop 'em!" Don said. "We're closing."

Thad's handlebar mustache drooped then lifted.

"You can't!" he shouted. "Everything's set."

"Ash Moulton got to Enos Slocum and I've no money. No other broker'd make an advance. Stop those can machines."

Thad went out. Marty sat down and tilted against the wall, his lids hiding his eyes. Don scarcely saw him. He'd hated to tell Thad he was licked. Thad was out of a job for the season.

The foreman came back. He was sunk, but he was raging too.

"Ash went to those brokers," he said. "No reason you shouldn't get twenty-five thousand. They'd play safe."

"What odds they get?" Marty asked.

"This ain't no bet," Thad said. "It's business, which you don't know anything about."

"Loaning anybody twenty-five grand is a bet."

"He's nuts," Thad said to Don. "If he buys a pack of cigarettes he figures he's betting he'll live long enough to smoke 'em."

"Take money out o' your pocket and you're laying a bet," Marty said. "What counts is the odds. How these brokers play it?"

He was still slumped far down. Only in a peculiar intensity in his voice did he show he was alive.

"The brokers play it safe enough," Thad said, "and get a fat commission when they sell the pack. The first ten thousand cases Don'd pack would clear him, and he coulda packed thirty to forty thousand if there's a good run o' pinks."

"If?" Marty said.

"We overfished in the war years. That might cut the runs."

"Might! Why don't you find out? Get a stop watch and sit on the rail at five o'clock. You got to know before you lay bets."

"You and your horses!" Thad shouted. "Right this minute there ain't a pink salmon in Alaska. No man's ever found out where they go or what they do."

Marty's sudden interest waned. "Then you fellows are betting on a race when you don't even know if there's a horse entered," he said in disgust.

"Betting the kind of money you never saw," Thad said, "The canners put eighty

million dollars into plants and gear. They borrow twenty-five million each season. That's betting more'n a hundred million the fish do come. You and your two-buck tickets!"

"Suckers," Marty said. "No dope, no form, no breeding."

Don turned to Thad. "I've got enough cash to pay a couple of months' wages," he said. "The can company'll get the cans. The wholesalers'll have to take back the supplies. Let's figure what I owe the crew."

That evening at the supper table Don told the men he was closing. It was the hardest thing he'd ever done. He'd promised a season's work and it was too late to get jobs elsewhere. A few grumbled.

"Shut up!" Thad said. "Ash Moulton got the brokers to renege on loans. You haven't worked a month but Don's going busted to give you two months' wages."

Don wrote the checks that night. It took more than $2,000, and he hadn't paid Thad. Two months' wages for Thad would clean him out.

"You got to keep something to eat on," Thad said.

"I'll eat," Don said. "So'll you. You're going fishing."

"Not me."

"Didn't I get a purse seiner with the cannery? We'll show the pinks somebody's after 'em. You'll share nearly as much as here and have a shorter season. Take these checks to the crew."

As soon as Thad had gone to the bunkhouse, Marty Boyle sat beside Don's desk.

"The way these fish run," he said. "I got to know."

The tensity was in his voice. His lids lifted slightly.

"These futurity fish," he said. "The two year olds."

"Guess you mean pinks," Don said. "Humpbacks, humpies."

"What you call 'em when they get three years old, Derby size?"

"Pinks never get that old. They spawn. Then they die."

Marty's lids jerked a little and for the first time Don got a look at a pair of gray eyes so keen they startled him.

"I don't like being kidded," Marty said.

"I'm telling it to you."

"But why do they die?"

Don shrugged. "Salmon do a lot of things nobody knows about," he said. "Like how they find their way to the rivers where they were hatched."

"I told you no kidding."

"Any old-timer in Alaska can look at a fish and tell you what river it was hatched in. Fish from some rivers are bigger or better than fish from another river. Some claim that after hundreds of years the fish of every river get different, one way or another. They've built up sort of a family. If they mixed with other rivers they'd all be alike."

Marty's lids lifted almost open.

"Blood strains!" he exclaimed. "You could chart 'em. Mudders, sprinters, routers! But I never liked the two year olds. Ain't you got some stake horses? Three year old and up?"

"Cohos are three year fish," Don said. "Some run four. Sockeyes go four in most places, five in a few. Kings live four to seven years. Chums go three, four or five. But the pinks, and that's what we get most of in Southeast, are always two-year fish."

MARTY leaned across the desk and tilted his head far back. Beneath the lids was a glow of excitement.

"These blood strains," Marty said. "Some having a better get, like Eclipse's or Lexington's—how's that come?"

"A salmon never eats after he hits fresh water. He goes up a river far as he can before he spawns, so before he comes in from the open ocean he makes a lot of fat and oil for bucking the current and jumping falls. The longer the river, the more he stores up."

"Bred for distance!" Marty exclaimed. What's the best strains you know?"

"Pinks count most in Southeast. The best come from this district, with Chickwan fish best of all."

Thad came in but the horse player continued to ask questions. Even in his ignorance, they were not foolish. Don thought he had a keener mind than the brokers in Seattle. The life history of the salmon fascinated Marty, and then he saw the possibility of depletion through overfishing.

"With the Government yelling for fish three years ago," Thad said, "we caught a hundred and one million salmon."

"A hundred and one what?" Marty demanded.

"What I said. Last year it was sixty-five million."

"Then your game's dead," Marty said. "There won't be hardly any this year."

"It don't work that way," Don said. "Take sockeyes. You get a bad run this year and four years from now you'll get another bad run. You figure on that and don't buy cans."

Don stood up. "I'm having a look for fishermen," he said.

He meant he'd go looking for Ash Moulton. He'd met failure, and it was complete. He couldn't even make good his promise to Sue that he'd be in Tamgas this summer. Don had never known such bitterness and the acid taste of it stung him. He might feel better if he beat Ash to a pulp.

Ash wasn't in Tamgas. Don learned he was building a trap for Chickwan Cove, and that didn't help his temper.

He went back to the office and to bed.

Next morning he looked over the purse seines and boat. They'd come with the plant, had cost him practically nothing, but that didn't change his mood. He'd thought he was through with purse seining. Now he had to start all over again, and he was powerless to do any harm to Ash. Crowding down prices for fish, getting the catch of Nevada's traps and boats, Ash was sure to come through the season in good shape. And next season he'd get half a million pinks of his own from Chickwan. Ash couldn't lose.

In the afternoon Don hunted for fishermen to man his purse seines. Boats at the floats were being painted and he talked to owners he had known, trying to get a line on men who liked to drive hard. He saw Sockeye Sam Agnew and a couple of others he took to be fish pirates. One had a trap seine spread brazenly on the hatch.

Don found a man he liked at once. Lloyd Geary was Alaska born, only a year or two older and plenty husky. He had an open way of looking at one and of talking.

"I've heard about you purse seining," he said. "I'm glad o' the chance."

He told of another good man who'd probably be in The Mug Up and Don went at once. As he entered the back room he stopped. Clouds were low and the place was dark but he saw Nevada Baird at her accustomed place by a window. Sue sat opposite.

He stood in the shadow, looking at her. Light from the window was full on her face and he forgot fishermen. Thoughts mixed with emotions and both were blurred. His one clear idea was that he wanted to marry this girl even more than he had wanted to marry Sue four years ago. It didn't help any to know she was the same person and that she was already his wife. That seemed to make it worse.

Charley, owner of The Mug Up, came in and Don asked if the fisherman was in the room. Charley pointed to a far corner and as Don walked across, Nevada beckoned. He hesitated. He didn't want to talk to Sue now, not when he was having his nose rubbed in the mud.

"I got to see you," Nevada said.

He went to the table. Sue didn't speak but she looked up. Her eyes were curious but not unfriendly.

"Sit down," Nevada said. "I've been thinking since yesterday."

Don took a chair between them. Maybe she had reconsidered.

"It's about Chickwan," she said. "I might be wrong."

He pushed his chair back angrily. "What difference does it make if you are?" he demanded.

"A lot to me. I've got too much conceit for myself. And sit down. We don't bite. Because I wouldn't sell you my fish is no reason to scowl at me. I like my judgment better'n yours, is all."

"Your judgment on Chickwan's no good," he said, but he sat down again.

Nevada was unruffled. "I sent a purse seiner down Surprise Passage a couple o' seasons, thinking the runs might build up," she said.

"If you didn't go you don't know about it," Don said.

"Oh, I went along the second year. The runs were everywhere else but there just weren't any Chickwan pinks. I made two trips and it was always the same."

"And you think you know fish!" Don said.

Sue leaned forward angrily.

"If Nevada doesn't know them, who does?" she cried.

Don looked from one to the other. Sue was more angry than Nevada and he smiled at her before he turned to the older woman.

"Weren't you ever wrong?" he asked. "What'll you bet a trap won't take half a million there next year? Every even year too. The odd years—Ash will wreck them, putting in a trap this season."

Nevada studied him a moment.

"If you're smarter than I am, I want to know how," she said. "Jake Perry had a pile trap in the cove from the early days. Made enough to branch out with more traps and three canneries. Got pinched in a bad year and I figured he overfished a couple of seasons, trying to get even."

"Didn't the gulls in the river tell you anything?" Don asked.

"I didn't go into the cove. We made our sets outside."

"Then you don't know what you're talking about."

Don wasn't angry. He was thinking about his first visit to Chickwan River after the fishing ended in 1917. Jimmy John had told how, late in the season ten years before, the Indians had made big hauls of fish in poor condition, and how the runs had been chopped off short. Don remembered his excitement when he'd deduced the answer. He faced Nevada.

"I never saw so many gulls in my life as at the mouth of Chickwan four years ago," he said. "Bears too. Thirty or forty. Fat as pigs. The banks were covered with fish skeletons and rotting fish. And late as it was, fish were still in the river. Trying to get up. Digging holes to lay their eggs in. Three months after the run had started. That wasn't overfishing. It wasn't overseeding. Only one answer to all that. And I'd found it."

He was back on the Chickwan, hurrying up the river to find what he knew he must find, an obstruction in the stream, and as he told the story of that day, and of the month he spent on the river, it became less his story and more the story of the fish, of how hundreds of thousands had swarmed in and found the way blocked, of how they had died in the futile struggle.

"Windfalls had come and wedged in a narrow rock gorge half a mile above the mouth," he said. "Gravel had piled up behind it, and then more smashed windfalls, until a dam was built that no fish could get over. It had been there all the years since Jake Perry went broke and died."

"And you blew it out," Nevada said.

"A little at a time. I didn't want to wash away the eggs laid below the dam. They had to hatch to start the odd-year runs again. I figured twenty thousand pinks spawned each season, below the dam, enough to keep the runs alive. After the dam was gone I went on upstream. Spent a month cleaning it out. It can be one of the best pink rivers in Southeast. I blew out a couple of small falls. When the pinks came in 'Eighteen they could go up ten miles."

Don was excited. It had been like finding gold, that day when he first saw the dam.

"Fish spawned in 'Seventeen would return in 'Nineteen," he said. "But the 'Eighteen run could go far upstream. No overseeding. Like old times. No dying without spawning. The 'Eighteen spawn would come back in 'Twenty. Should be a fair run. Perhaps two hundred thousand fish. This year should be the same. But 'Twenty-two! That's a big river! Fine bars! It can handle more'n a million fish. A trap can take more'n half a million. Year after year!"

HE HAD been talking to Nevada but as he stopped he turned to Sue. She was excited too and her eyes were warm, her lips slightly parted. Don forgot the the fish but when Sue saw the ardor in his face she looked away.

"No," Nevada said. "Maybe you did all that but the fish didn't come back. Seiners woulda found 'em."

"What seiners? Nobody's seined there since the river went dead. Surprise Passage opens to the sea. The mouth is filled with reefs and kelp. It's wide. Other fish that use the passage are caught farther up by the Indian village, where it's narrow and seiners have a chance. Think I didn't look it over? There isn't even a spot where you can put a trap outside the cove."

"You win," Nevada said. "I didn't

know anything about fish. You know what they think."

"Only I don't win," Don said, and the bitterness returned.

"You should have filed on that trap the day you got back to Alaska."

"And have a dozen purse seiners hanging around outside this season? I had it figured out. I'd build a trap and then file on the site just before the season started. But the trap wouldn't be fishing. It'd let all the fish through. And being spotted so late, the purse seiners wouldn't know. They wouldn't kill the odd-year runs. Like Ash will kill 'em now with his trap."

He heard an exclamation from Sue. Her head was high, her eyes flashing. Don's own anger rose.

"Ash don't care for fish," he said. "I gave 'em a break. Figured the thing out. Did the work. Took the chance. Then he stole it from me."

He looked at Sue and hoped she'd sound off in defense of Ash. He'd like a chance to tell her what Ash was really like.

She didn't, and he turned back to Nevada. They'd tried to beat him down and they hadn't. Even the great Nevada Baird admitted she'd failed where he'd succeeded. Maybe she'd still come in with him at the cannery.

"You've got a chance to get a fair price for fish this season," he said. "Got a chance for a profit besides."

"No!" Sue cried. "You can't pull her into your crazy scheme."

Her hands were clenched. Her eyes were blazing as he remembered they could.

"You've got nothing!" she cried. "A shed with some machines in it. But no money, no credit. You've never even poked a salmon into a can. And you're asking Nevada to turn over thirty thousand dollars' worth of fish for you to play with. You've got no chance to win. She wouldn't have. But she can play safe. Ash has a fine plant, money, plenty of credit. He'll pay Nevada cash for her fish. She'd be a fool to go in with you."

She'd spoken swiftly, with vehemence rather than anger. Now she cut loose.

"Riley Grannan's Last Adventure"

This is the classic of funeral sermons—the sermon delivered in a burlesque theater in Rawhide, Nevada, by Herman W. Knickerbocker, the busted preacher-prospector, over the body of Riley Grannan, the dead-broke gambler.

ADVENTURE has ordered a large reprint of this famous booklet. Now available at ten cents a copy.

Adventure
205 East 42nd Street
New York 17, N. Y.

Please send me.....copies of "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure." I am enclosing.....cents. (10c in stamps or coin for each copy desired.)

.....
Name

.....
Street Address

.....
City or Town State

"That's the business end of it!" she cried. "But it isn't business to you. You don't care whether Nevada wins or loses. All you care about is working out a grudge against Ash Moulton. You're only trying to cut Ash's throat with Nevada's money."

Don didn't like it. She was talking sense if Ash were honest. But Ash wasn't.

"She running your business for you, Nevada?" he asked.

"She never has but I'll turn this over to her."

Don stood up. That ended everything. He turned without looking at Sue. He went out without seeing the fisherman.

$ THAT evening Thad and his brother came into the office. Marty sat at Don's desk and took out paper and pencil.

"What's the stakes in this race," he asked. "And what's the entry fee?"

"What you driving at?" Don asked.

"This cannery. What's it cost to run it? How many cases can you pack? What will you get for them? How much you pay for fish? What the cans cost?"

Don stared at the little man.

"He must be making up a form chart on fish," Thad said. "I'm going nuts from all the questions he's asked."

Marty ignored that. His strange lids lifted a little and Don saw fire in his eyes.

"I want all the dope," Marty said. "To figure the odds."

Don shook his head. "I'm sick of talking fish," he said.

"Talking can't hurt you. You're through here. Shoot!"

Don felt a strange compulsion in the little man's tensity. He felt strength too, and couldn't understand it.

"How many cases?" Marty asked again.

"We count on thirty thousand with a one-line plant in a fair year," Don said. "If the fish come right, not in bunches, we might put up forty thousand."

"How many fish would that take?" Marty asked as he wrote.

"Pinks here run fifteen to a case. Say half a million."

"What'd they cost you?"

"At six cents, thirty thousand dollars. Don't know yet what the price will be."

"How much you get a case?"

"Six dollars last year. May go down to four this season."

Marty asked many questions, learned the cans cost $25,000, labor $17,000, transportation and shipping $10,000. There'd be machinery rental, as the can company owned most of it, and insurance and broker's commission, interest, plenty of other expenses. Marty added his figures.

"A hundred thousand bucks," he said. "Who's going to put up that kind o' jack? This game's cockeyed."

"It doesn't work that way," Don said. "Twenty-five thousand from a broker would carry this plant. The first ten thousand cases would put him in the clear and he'd put up more cash. Cans are on the cuff till the season closes. Most of the labor isn't paid till then. Got to pay fishermen on delivery."

Marty took all those figures apart and examined them. He bent over the desk, writing swiftly. He asked more questions.

Abruptly Marty picked up his notes and went out.

"I've seen him work all night on form charts. Always had to have something to dope out," Don said.

After breakfast next morning Don started for the floats to find another fisherman. Marty Boyle stopped him.

"I got something to talk about," he said. "Want Thad too."

Don went into the office and soon the Boyles came in.

"The only tracks open on the coast are in California," Marty began at once. "They're running for fun there. You can't bet a dime. So I came up to see how Thad was doing and I bump into a swell meeting. I want to get down a bet and I'll go twenty-five thousand."

"You nuts?" Thad shouted. "You ain't got twenty-five cents. Besides, you're always saying you never played a hunch."

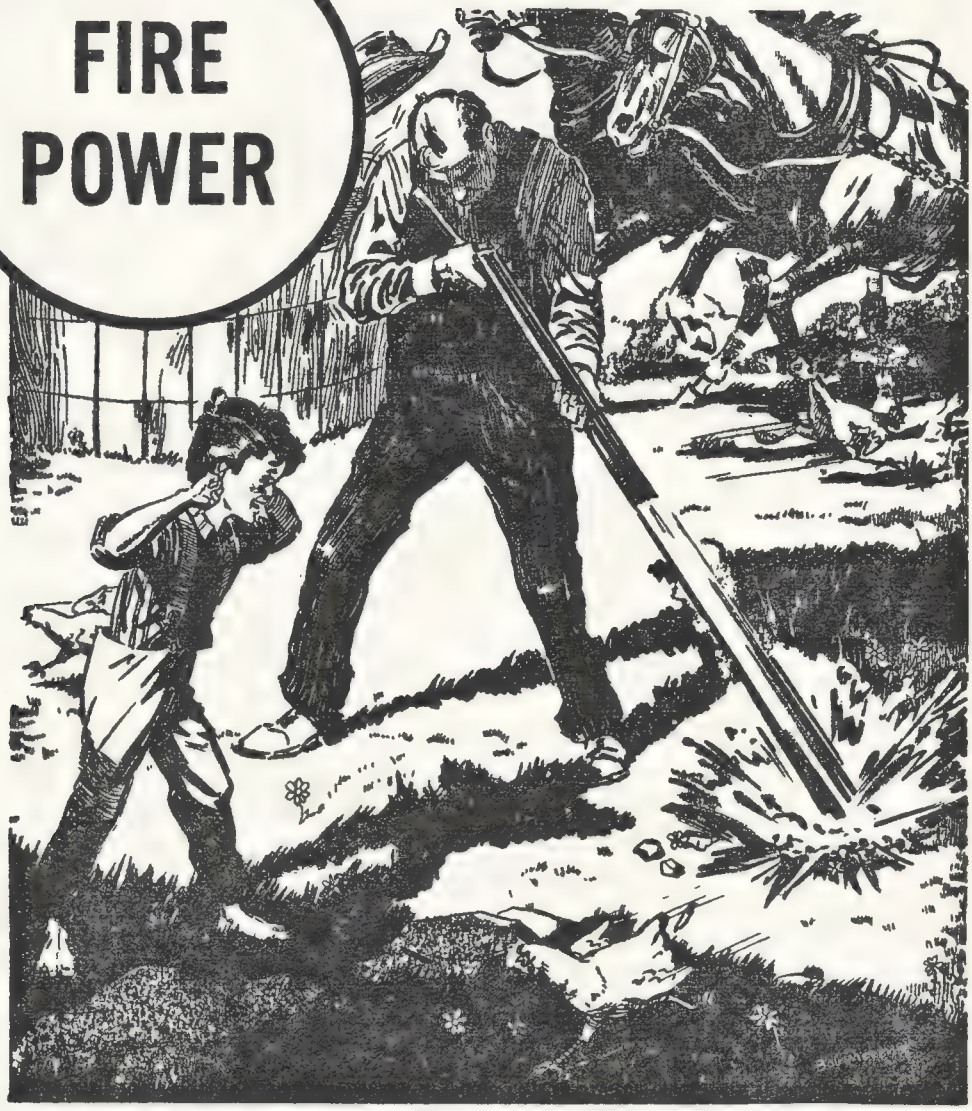
"I've got the money and I ain't playing a hunch," Marty said. "I'm playing these two year old pinks and the kid here strictly on form. I'm going by blood strains and past performances.

"I never did go for steeplechases or that stuff the English like. I always want it over fast. But now, with nothing else to do, I'll lay a bet and wait till these two year old pinks come down the stretch."

(End of Part I)

FIRE POWER

By JOHN T. BUTCHER



"I give that frog both barrels, an' blowed a hole where he had set."

OLD JEB slid his plow out of mellow loam at the end of the waist-high corn, dropped the handles and lifted the cotton plow-line from his neck, as the mule moved into the shade of the row of sand pear trees which formed a lane to the house. I pulled in close to the barb-wire fence and leaned out with the letter; and, after holding it up to the morning sun, he slit it open with his pocket-knife and handed me a photograph.

I recognized the youth in Navy whites astride a battle-wagon fourteen-inch gun, and the old man chuckled.

"I reckon now he's got a shootin'-iron

ILLUSTRATED BY BOB MEYERS

to suit him. With some it's likker, women, cards or hosses—but Jeb's weakness has always been guns, the bigger an' noisier the better." He tapped his pipe on a horny palm, filled and lighted it and rested his elbows on a fence-post. I switched the motor and lit a cigarette.

"He wa'n't more'n nine or ten years old when he took such a shine to my old forty-five I had to take an' hide it in self-defense, an' when you use them tactics on a young 'un you are courtin' trouble. Whoever invented the sayin', 'out of sight is out of mind,' wa'n't acquainted with young Jeb. He couldn't see a black-snake or a sparrow-hawk without he's eggin' me to shoot it. But that wa'n't nothing to the frog. D'I ever tell you about my frog?

"ONE hot day we come in from breakin' new ground; and the team plumb sweated dry, and couldn't hardly wait till I unhitch to make a bee-line for the tank. But when they got to water they refused to drink—just stood there pointin' their ears down at it, tossin' their heads an' snortin'. I go to see what's ailin' 'em, and find a green frog flirtin' round the tank. Young Jeb was with me, an' he commenced hollerin' shoot him, but I cornered him an' got him out and throwed him just as far as I could out across the pasture.

"I throwed him far enough to make a tol'able weary journey for a water varmint, but next day he's back in business. This kind of aggravated me. I set some store by that big concrete tank, it bein' a sort of symbol, as you might say, of respectability. It was my first improvement when I quit mule-skinnin' for the railroad to settle down an' raise the young 'un right, and when I laid it out I had in mind to wash him reg'lar every Saturday regardless if he needed it or not.

"There's plenty water for the frog an' us too if his needs was suited to his size; but no, he'd got to take up so much room he couldn't spare none for the mules. So this time when I'd caught him I chunked him down again' the ground a couple times before I sailed him over the barn.

"When he sailed over the ridgepole I was satisfied if he wa'n't dead he sure was mightily discouraged; so next day when the mules was skittish at the water-tank I reckoned it was only their imagination. But when I went an' looked, be dern if he wa'n't back an' spry as ever.

"He musta knowed he had wore out his welcome, or been practicin' an' set his heart on not bein' caught. I finally got so wet an' mad I clumb in after him an' made a lunge, an' he run up my britches-leg. I grabbed the bottom of my overalls an' poured him an' about a gallon of water out onto the ground. He made a couple of limber-legged leaps an' fetched up in the shade of the wagon-bed an' set there thinkin' his evil thoughts an' layin' for a chance to beat me to the water-tank.

"Young Jeb was hollering to shoot him, so I says go fetch the gun. He lit out, an' come runnin' back with my old forty-five. It's one of these old-timey long-barreled one-man cannons played so prominent a part in civilizin' the Southwest, but oversize artillery for frogs. And what's more it's the first I knowed young Jeb knowed where I'd hid it. I took it off'n him and sent him back to fetch the twenty-gauge I use on doves, but he was purely disappointed.

"I give that frog both barrels, an' blowed a hole where he had set an' didn't leave enough of him to mention, so I reckoned I was shed of him for good. So next day when the mules commenced to snortin' same as usual, it got away with me. I says, 'Enough's enough. You know as good as I do he ain't there, an' you're a pair of long-eared liars!' But when I took one look I set down in the shade and fanned myself. I've heard some tall tales in my time concernin' goats an' snakes an' wild-cats bein' hard to kill, but this laid over anything I'd ever heard. The more I studied it the more unreasonable it seemed, so I got up an' looked again—an' it was him all right, a-gogglin' up at me an' darin' me to come on in.

"Well, I clumb in an' me an' that frog had a time. All we had done before was mere preliminaries to the rodeo we put on then; me a-sloshing an' a-grabbin' in the water, an' him gettin' more excited, takin' sportier chances every time. I'd make a splunge an' offer him my britches-leg, but he knowed better. So finally I took 'em off an' propped 'em open under water, an' finally corralled him in 'em, though they was slightly too large for him.

"Young Jeb was dancing round excited, offering to fetch the forty-five if I would

tell him where it was; but I just grabbed the first thing come to hand, which was a trace-chain, an' beat that frog until it was a shame, then took a spade an' buried the remainders three foot deep an' pounded down the dirt. I says if he come back this time there's nothing left but dynamite the tank.

"NEXT day when I unhitched the mules I stood there watching 'em to see what they would do; and when they commence putting on the same old act, seem like it kind of broke my spirit. I just hove a sigh an' went an' looked inside the tank. That scamp was there all right, as big as life an' flirting here and yonder like he's earning overtime to do it. Somebody's whimperin' insane-like, an' I realized it's me, an' says, 'Now this won't do. No mizzable frog is going to disarrange my mind.'

"Young Jeb was hollering about the forty-five, so that put me to thinkin'. I knowed there was a branch not far away where there was frogs, and I had my suspicions. I always did believe a free confession's worth a heap more than the other kind though, and young 'uns learn more from an object lesson than a dozen beatin's, so I says, 'Y'all mules'll have to make your own arrangements with this frog,' an' went on to the house.

"That evenin' we're resting in the shade of the back gallery to cut a melon, and I says, 'Pore fellow, I can understand just how he felt.'

"Jeb says, 'Who felt, Pa?' and I says, 'Fellow I knowed in Arizona was afraid of horned toads, so they deviled him about 'em. Used to slip 'em in his boots at night, an' in his bunk—till finally he got to thinkin' he was one. Got so he squatted in the sunshine all day long an' snapped at flies. The last I heard he'd done got so he favored one.'

"Young Jeb stops with his mouth cram full of melon, lookin' for me to crack a smile. I go on eating, and after awhile he takes another bite, and I sing out, 'Ga-rump!'

"He looked up kind of scared and says, 'Eh, Pa?'

"I never said a word, just went on eating. After awhile I drawed my legs up under where I'm setting on the gallery, sing out, 'Ga-rump!' and made a flyin' leap down in the grass.

"Well, that was just too much for Jeb. He bust out crying an' jumped down an' throwed his arms around my neck a-hollering, 'You ain't a toad-frog, Pa. Please say you ain't! I'll get him out an' never put another'n in. I swear I won't!'

"I couldn't laugh for feeling sorry for the little chap. He'd nigh'bout wore himself out catchin' frogs for me to massacree. The first one got in natural somehow, and come back once; but after that 'twas different ones he'd put in there to make me shoot that forty-five.

"Of course I give it to him then, and shoulda done it long before, but said he wa'n't to shoot it till he's man enough to aim it with one hand."

Old Jeb retrieved the photograph and studied it admiringly.

"He always liked his shootin'-irons big an' noisy, so I reckon he's satisfied."

ILLUSTRATED BY
GEORGE WERT

THE HACKING MATCH

By

TIM PRIDGEN

JUST before the dirt began to fall with that awful sound upon Mister Billie McVane's coffin, the fit of laughter caught the men and nearly broke up the funeral. There was Mister Billie going into his grave, and there was Jonah Rhyne getting the hell away from there up the sand ridge. His eyes were jerking and his long legs were beating his cutaway tails out behind like curtains in the wind.

Big-mouthed Luke Bryan was the one who really started it. Luke stood there, having passed by for the last view of the dead, turning purple trying to sing the Doxology. His mustache stiff-elbowed out at the corners like a yellow bird about to take wing, his eyes were swimming and about to pop. He had a curious, strained ghastly look. In another moment he was going to disgrace himself with his big laugh that could have been heard all the way over to Duddery's Mill, else he was going to get out, or die, he was in such agony. He could hold back no longer and sneaked off behind the church like a suck-egg dog. There he fell on the ground and rolled and beat the sand with his fists. When he looked up, six other men had come, and then twelve. They were on their knees or bent over or flat out, all strangling and straining and weeping.

Most people first knew something was wrong when the hacking match crowd began leading the way by the coffin.

On the other side of the church the solemn undertaker from the county seat was in a fidget, first on one foot and then the other, and the young stranger preacher was doing his level best to hold the service together to the end.

"I seen it wi' my own eyes, and I don't believe it yet!" Luke managed to gasp. "They were burying the wrong man—Jonah—"

Old Miz Susan McVane, Mister Billie's wife, stood there alone, not seeming to notice. Folks said she held up mighty well in her grief, even to having a brooding sort of comfort in her sharp black eyes. After the benediction she went straight to her buggy and quietly drove off home.

Soon everyone was gone, leaving only Jonah Rhyne's forgotten mule hitched to a scrub oak. Divided across the saddle was a white sack of grist corn, looking like one of the tombstones.

Mister Billie's accident in the woods had been on Monday, so his funeral fell on Wednesday, which was mill day at Duddery's. The men came by for the service and then took their corn. and their laugh, on to the mill.

That laugh was no new thing about Mister Billie and Jonah. It was, you might say, the climax to a laugh that had been going on for years and years.

The men, half ashamed of it but still giggle-crazy, set their sacks down in a long row, as usual, so that the first to come would be the first served. Then they sat on the bench around the platform out front, over the pond where it came down to the mill gates. But today no one cared whether Cal Duddery ground meal and hominy grits in proper order or not. They were going to stay all day, or until Jonah Rhyne should come. Meanwhile they laughed, and the rumbling old mill seemed to chime right in with a chuckle in its belly.

No one sat in the corner at the post. That was Jonah Rhyne's place. He sat there Wednesday after Wednesday tugging at his dark up-curled mustache, egging the boys on, a kind of ringleader at what was called the hacking match. That was his seat and today they very specially left it open for him. When one thought of something new to say about the way he looked when he saw in the coffin, they'd break out fit to split.

"Pt! Ha-a-a-a-a-a-a!" Hap Duncan squalled and pounded both knees. His voice was so high he might have been singing tenor: "If Beck's bad mule had kicked him in the belly, he wouldn'er looked more onexpected!"

On the tail of that laugh Luke Bryan spluttered, "Er like he'd been butted by John here's billygoat. I thought his eyes would jump out, shore!"

All the while they cut their eyes up the road, looking for Jonah to come. They were waiting for him just as these years they had cut their eyes up the road for Mister Billie's appearance.

Jonah Rhyne's booming reproach had echoed over Cal Duddery's pond a hundred times, "Oh Billie, can't you take a little joke?"

And Mister Billie had boomed irately back, "A joke—yes! But the braying of a flock of smart-aleck jackasses—no! No!"

All that remained now was to see if Jonah, himself, could take a joke—his own joke—and the hacking match crowd waited with fiendish patience.

NO ONE rightly remembered when Jonah had begun to hack at Mister Billie. It had been going on all the lives of us younger ones. The older men said that it started not long after Mister Billie had won Miss Susan away from Jonah, but not enough then really to mention. It was some time later that the Wednesday hacking match at Duddery's Mill had become a regular thing.

Everybody says that you can't keep a good man down, but you can hack him and keep him off balance and he doesn't get a fair chance to show that he is a good man. Nobody likes to follow a laughing stock, and Jonah Rhyne had done that to Mister Billie. When you thought of one you thought of the other, and when you thought of them you laughed at the latest joke Jonah had played on him. Of course, everyone said, it was all in fun.

So, the thing came to be as much a part of the neighborhood as the Democratic Party or the Ladies' Aid or the railroad station or the Little Bend Bridge. When the men came home from the mill their women would be waiting to ask them first thing, "And what fun did Jonah Rhyne poke at Billie McVane today?" or, maybe,

"Did you give Jonah and his crowd as good as they sent?"

And the man would puff himself out and say, "Oh, Jonah knowed better, time I chawed off Tom Lackey's smart boy Perce. Perce, he says to me—and I seen 'em riggin' it up before I got there—he says, 'Hi, Pete! How's your wife like her new bresh broom?' I seen then that he was crackin' about my beard, but I let him have his say. 'What bresh broom?' says I. Then he says, 'I see you're wearin' her old one on your face!' Then, quick as a wink, before they could laugh, I says, 'That ain't no bresh broom. That's a whish broom, to keep off blow flies like you!' Man, that cooked 'im. They carried him high. They can't make nothin' off o' me, Millie!"

But that was what he told his wife; something, like as not, he had thought up on the way home that he wished he had said.

This is no suggestion that such a conversation might have taken place between Mister Billie and Miss Susan. He would have cut her off short, "Foolishness! Foolishness! Foosh! No time!" and been off about whatever business absorbed him.

It was Mister Billie's single-minded stubbornness and irascibility that Jonah Rhyne found so useful.

When Mister Billie brought his corn to mill he had no thought except that the corn was to be ground and he return home at the first minute possible.

"Here! Here!" He would set the bag at Cal's feet. "I want it quick. I'm in a hurry."

"All right, Mister Billie! Set it up there at the end of the line. Got about ten ahead of you."

"But I got to go. Got things to do."

"Well, the first thing you got to do is wait."

"Bah!"

They said that over and over, mill day after mill day, and Mister Billie, as long as he lived, never got the idea that he had to take his turn. People were not offended. They laughed. He meant no harm.

He didn't have to do so, but being a stubborn man, he always left Cal and went out on the platform where the hackers sat. What he wanted, perhaps wished for more than we ever knew, was merely to sit quietly and join in the neighborhood talk. The sharp jokes he took there always seemed to surprise him first, then infuriate him.

"Well! Well, boys!" he greeted them invariably. Then he would cast his weather eye over the cypresses in the pond. "Think it's going to rain?"

Jonah Rhyne always was waiting for that, sprawled out in his corner, smiling.

"Well, Billie," he'd say, loudly, for everyone to hear and get set to laugh, "if it don't we're in for a powerful long dry spell! Wha! Wha! Wha!"

And then came the chorus, a gale of laughter, forced laughter, with fifteen or twenty men laughing as hard and loud and as long as they could, driving the ridicule home. That was the way of the hacking match, a sort of team. More malice than humor in it, and no fair play at all.

Back through the long haze you may see why. Our community was poor. The late summers brought dismal droughts or drowning floods, and the soil was like a quicksand to drag the people down. Its disappointments were surer than its promises. The Earth mocked them and the people mocked each other. Some other person than Jonah Rhyne might have set the community tone to that of religion, or stinginess, or progressive cooperation. Mister Billie in his queer way had some such latter idea. But Jonah's was the loud voice. It was sardonic. The pessimism of the people found its outlet there.

Sometimes Mister Billie on these occasions blunted the joke merely by not hearing it. At these times he would stand wriggling his unruly mustache, thinking about his present imperative project, whatever it might be; sucking his teeth, picking with his goose quill toothpick. When there was quiet enough he would say absently, "Yes, yes, that's a fact! That's the God's truth. How's your folks, Luke?"

Mostly, however, he would hear and understand. A hurt look would come into his eyes and he would become angry and begin shouting back. Few ever heard what he said, because it was a fundamental of the hacking match that the hacked one should be drowned out with laughter. The more Mister Billie shouted and stormed and shook his fist and grew red in the face the louder the men laughed. "Oh Billie, can't you take a little joke?" Jonah would say. Oh, it was great fun.

Most men bringing their corn up to the mill were willing to take a poke or two themselves for the privilege of sitting in and laughing at the next man, but not Mister Billie. Sometimes he would be so angry and rattled he would stamp off and leave his corn, just as Jonah had done at his funeral. That was the best yet, when he did that. Sometimes he would go back in the mill and fuss and fume until Cal ground his grist. But in the meantime he had made the hacking match a success. Jonah had hacked him and there would be a thing to tell all over the neighborhood for a whole week.

Some days old Miss Susan would come to the mill with Mister Billie and on those days, you may be sure, there was no hacking at him. She would come in off the dam beside him, her black eyes snapping and looking at Jonah and us as though we were a mess of grubbing worms in a cow lot. Still, that was no relief for Mister Billie, for then he really did look hacked, as though he felt that he might be accused of hiding behind his wife's skirts.

But Miss Susan's presence made the day a failure for Jonah Rhyne. She loved Mister Billie for what he really was, and she scorned Jonah for screening his sly enmity behind what passed for fun. We didn't see that then but she did and the sight of her lashing glance was about all that Jonah could tote.

MISTER BILLIE and Jonah, about the same age, weren't so very old. That is, they weren't gray yet, and much younger than the very old ones who sat on front porches and flapped flies. They came along in Cap'n Benny Mareden's crowd.

"I reckon," Cap'n Benny said, in one of the quiet spells that day, "that I'm the only one here that knows exactly what happened when Jonah and Billie locked horns over Susan."

Everyone stopped and gave him attention, for there were several tales about that. The sudden notice almost flustered him, for Cap'n Benny was a gentle little man and never took the lead in conversation. He spat his tobacco juice over into the pond and braced himself.

"Jonah," he said, "won't come. Mark my words. I say it from what I learned a long time ago."

Some of us, maybe, had suspicioned that Jonah couldn't take his own medicine, from the way he was jealous of anybody who tried to take the lead in the hacking match. But he always was too quick-tongued to be caught in a pinch he couldn't come out of laughing.

"Jonah and Billie," Cap'n Benny continued, "were the gay blades of the neighborhood when I was growing up. They looked some alike, being distantly akin through the old Borton family, away back. Jonah was a dashing, dressy fellow and the girls all set their caps for him. He wore a jim-swinger coat then, just as he does now, curled his mustache up, just as you saw it today, and parted his hair in the middle. Billie never cared much for dress.

"But Billie," Cap'n Benny pointed out, "always was the one to get up things, parties and picnics and hickory nut hunts. He was the one to order the block of ice from the city for the tub of lemonade and the one to see that the square dance platform was mended and ready. He hired the fiddler and saw that he was paid. Jonah never would. He'd wait until the party was set up and then he'd come and be the biggest one there. He danced the fanciest and talked the gayest and sparked the girls the boldest. All this while Billie would be bustling around seeing to things.

"I always figgered that Jonah was the least bit scared of Billie. You know—about taking the lead. Billie loved to work and do things and get people to do things with him. Jonah didn't. He liked to be the whole show. So, while Billie's things weren't any better than Jonah's they were better kept. His harness was better shined and his horses slicker. He kept the bushes and briers out of his fence jams. So, to keep himself from being pushed back, Jonah evened it up with sly digs. Not much. Just fly-speckin'. Just enough to keep Billie looking kind of ridiculous, might say.

"They sparked all the girls, but it seemed that Jonah never cared much for one until she was going steady with Billie. Then Jonah'd pitch in and cut him out. He said that he always had Billie to warm 'em up for him. Billie didn't like it, of course, but what could he do?

"After a while the time came for them to get married and settle down and Jonah

was the first one to show signs. He began going steady with Susan Rodney, old Sam's daughter. Susan, no question, was the likeliest girl around in those days. She was short and a little broad, maybe, but mighty sensible and kept her feet on the ground and said what she thought. And she was pretty, too. Her dark, snappin' eyes are pretty until now, as you all know. She seemed to think right well of Jonah and folks all said it was a match.

"Then one Sunday after dinner me and my wife went over to visit the Rodneys. We and Sam and his folks and kinfolks sat out front under the trees and talked. Jonah was there, sitting with Susan on a bench.

"We heard a buggy and it was Billie driving up the lane. His horses were trotting smart and his outfit looked fancy—better than he did, himself.

"He hitched and came on up to the crowd, and everybody could see that he had something on his mind.

" 'Howdy! Howdy! How you all?' was the way he spoke. Then before everybody was through speaking to him he broke in and said, 'I came over to see Susan.'

"Jonah grinned and winked at the crowd and said, 'Well, you got to see me first, Billie!'

"Susan, maybe, didn't like that too well, so she said, 'What about, Billie?'

"Then Billie said, and it was just the awkward thing he would say, 'That's a fair question and I'll give you a fair answer. I been thinking about it and I made up my mind for us to get married.'

"Well, everybody just whooped. Billie stood there blinking his eyes, wondering why. Susan blushed rosy red and laughed a little, too.

" 'But, Billie,' she said after a while, 'this is almost too sudden.'

"Then Billie said, 'Well, think about it. I got something else to do right now, anyhow. I'll be back to see you in a day or two.'

"So, he hustled off and everybody watched him and chuckled, except Jonah just reared back and roared.

"The upshot of it was that Billie did come back and Susan let him. She went with both of them, first one and then the other, for near about a year. Then she surprised everybody by dropping Jonah and marrying Billie.

"Jonah took it pretty hard, I reckon. He went around the neighborhood making a great laugh about it. Without exactly saying so he tried to leave the impression that dumb old Billie had done him a great favor. Then, just to show that he didn't care—which maybe showed backwards—he upped and married Cass Jones' Nell within a month."

THINGS, it seems, then rocked along for quite a spell without anything much happening. Susan held Billie down in his queer little ways and they began building up and getting ahead. Folks paid attention and sort of looked to Billie to get out front in the neighborhood and take the lead.

After that, whether it was by design or just happened so no one knows now, it seemed that about every time Billie went to the mill Jonah was there, always joking. A little crowd began to build up around him, for everybody loved to laugh, of course. Sometimes Billie would take it with a grin, sometimes he would blow up and go off in a huff. "Oh Billie, can't you take a little joke?" Jonah would shout after him, and everybody would laugh.

So, that was the start of the hacking match. It gave strength to Jonah and took strength from him and also sank roots among the people who were becoming bitter in their struggle. Otherwise the curious feud between Jonah and Mister Billie might long ago have died out.

Without anybody realizing a change, Mister Billie came to be looked upon as a peculiarly funny man. Anything he might do was investigated for its ridiculous side. Jonah made various comments which the people repeated and laughed at.

Jonah said, "Billie, he found out God Almighty done it wrong and he's got to pitch in and fix it."

And that wasn't saying that Mister Billie was anybody's fool. He was a hard worker and had things on his farm that other people didn't have, maybe didn't want. He put up a windmill that, when the wind blew—which was not always—pumped water right into Miss Susan's kitchen. He put up a hay hoist to save a lot of pitchforking. He hollowed out logs and diverted water to one of his fields to irrigate it and off-set the droughts.

It was Jonah who made these improvements ridiculous. "I druv by Billie's place today," he said, "and a hootin' owl was a-roostin' on his windmill and Susan was a-totin' water."

That was a good thing to tell wives who had no running water in their kitchens. The husbands laughed, and wives, perhaps not as heartily as their husbands, laughed, too. Billie McVane and his projects were very funny.

It seems silly to think of it now, with the people making big money every year from strawberries and other early truck crops, but one of the biggest jokes that Jonah Rhyne had was when Mister Billie preached the gospel that people had to get away from the uncertainties of late crops and grow early things for the market. He tried strawberries but didn't know enough and shipped two crates of fine, luscious, soft berries not good for shipping. He was billed for the express charges.

Jonah told it at the mill. "They tell me, Billie," he said, "that the Mayor of New York wrote you a letter and said your strawberry juice was fine, but after this to send it in a jug!"

That made Mister Billie terribly angry, but they laughed him down. After that when people drove along the road they would smile and point out Mister Billie's "strawberry juice patch."

The laugh that kept up the longest was about the picture, because everybody had one in the front parlor to remind him. When, at Mister Billie's funeral, the thing happened that did happen, the older people nodded sagely and said, "Jonah can't turn that off with a joke. He done it hisself."

That also came out of one of Mister Billie's projects. He thought there should be a short-cut road through Burnt Island Swamp—and it was a good idea. He finally harassed everybody to the point that, for peace of mind, they set a day and went to work. A traveling photographer came by and offered to take a group picture. Just as he was about to press the bulb, Jonah, for the devilment of it, leaned over and with a smirk on his lips blocked out most of Mister Billie's face. When the picture came everybody bought one, for that was a big thing to laugh at. There was hardly any of Mister Billie in the picture at all, but a heck of a lot of Jonah.

MISTER BILLIE was in his own woods when his accident happened. He was felling a pine for fence rails when the wind rose and upset his calculations. The tree jumped the stump and twisted down unexpectedly. It caught him as he was trying to run from under. It left him terribly broken about the chest and head.

The word spread late Monday and a large crowd of neighbors, as though they suddenly realized they hadn't been quite fair with him, went to the house that night. They did not see the body for Miss Susan had agreed that the undertaker should remove it from the woods directly to his place in the county seat. She held up fine, everyone thought. She even heard Jonah Rhyne tell her, "He was one of my best friends. We were boys together," without show of resentment. She nodded calmly and turned away from him.

Miss Susan never explained anything, or admitted or denied anything, did not even pass it off as a mistake. All she ever said was that she didn't know, that she didn't want to remember Billie's face in the condition it was and didn't look. If the smart alecks wanted to laugh, she said, it was no more than they had done for a lifetime. So, no one ever knew for sure.

But the undertaker, Mr. Cassie, was almost pathetically voluble.

"It was like this, see, my friend? I had never seen this corpse alive, and I didn't know him from Adam's house cat. No, sir! Not from Adam's house cat. So I went to the moddum with what delicateness I could, and I says, 'Moddum, you realize that the departed's—ah—countenance is not what it once was? In fact I may say', I says to her, 'that he practically has no face.' She made a strange answer to that. She said shortly, 'He's had no face for years,' but, my friend, in times of grief people do not always talk with the best of sense. I did not understand it then and I do not understand it yet.

"I did not press the point, but I says, 'However, if you will describe the departed's features to me in particular, or, better yet, give me a picture of him, I will do what I can for the restoration of the departed's face.'

"That seemed to penetrate her grief and she looked at me in a queer way and she says. 'You can make it look like a picture?'

and I says, 'I can do only what I can, moddum.'

"So, she brought me a group picture. 'That one,' she says, and put her finger down.

"Well, naturally, my friend—" Mr. Cassie shrugged both shoulders and spread both hands.

We people around Duddery's Mill knew more about that picture than he did. After the funeral we took sides on it and argued. We fetched the picture to the mill and sought to prove our points by it. You could take it almost any way you wished, but everybody agreed that the mudsill of it was Jonah, himself, and that he couldn't blame anybody.

"Of course," said the undertaker with elaborate generosity, nevertheless seeking a good out, "I could have misunderstood her and I'm not saying I didn't. If she says I did, then I say so, too. But somehow—*somehow*—" Mr. Cassie became cautious, "I figger that she figgered that I'd misfiggered. I may be wrong. If she says I'm wrong I am wrong."

However it may have happened, it is true that the biggest laugh that the hacking crowd ever had was at the end of Mister Billie's funeral.

EVERYBODY stood under the trees on one side of the grave. The little supply preacher who was filling the pulpit that summer announced the Doxology and said that all the friends might walk by then for the last view of the dead.

Most people first knew that something was wrong when the hacking match crowd began leading the way by the coffin. As each one stopped to look you would have thought that someone stood behind and hammered him between the shoulder blades, he jerked so. Then he would step high and with a scared expression on his face move on to join the group on the other side. They daren't look at each other but stood singing and poking each other with their elbows.

Then it was Jonah Rhyne's turn. I was in the line behind him, fascinated by the strained purple cast on big-mouthed Luke Bryan's face. He was struggling with a suppressed laugh which, if let loose, would wake the dead. To hold it down, Luke was singing the Doxology with all his power, watching Jonah Rhyne solemnly coming up to the coffin.

Jonah looked down upon the undertaker's weird mistake. First his eyes squinted and then began to swell. There he was, himself, his own spit-'n-image, lying in the coffin—up-turned mustache and all, even to a little of the smirk pictured when he hid most of Mister Billie's face from the photographer.

Jonah's feet took sudden long, high steps away but his spectral fright held his face hanging back over his shoulder. At the end of the grave he stopped and reared back, his eyes jerking every which way, up and around, as though he might expect to see the Angel of Death hovering over him. Then he left there, high-tailing up the sandhill, his long legs beating his coat tails out behind.

The others might have held in through the benediction, but old loose-mouthed Luke lost his grip. He was at that part of the Doxology which said, ". . . from Whom all blessings flow . . ." and he sang it, ". . . all blessings flow-ho-ho-ho-ho! . . ." and lit out from there around the corner of the church. The others were right behind him, leaving the women there to do the best they could.

We waited at the mill until nearly sundown for Jonah to come. He never did. The men had laughed until they couldn't laugh. Even the somber old mill seemed to chuckle. It was the greatest laugh the hacking match ever had, and the last. It never amounted to anything after that day.

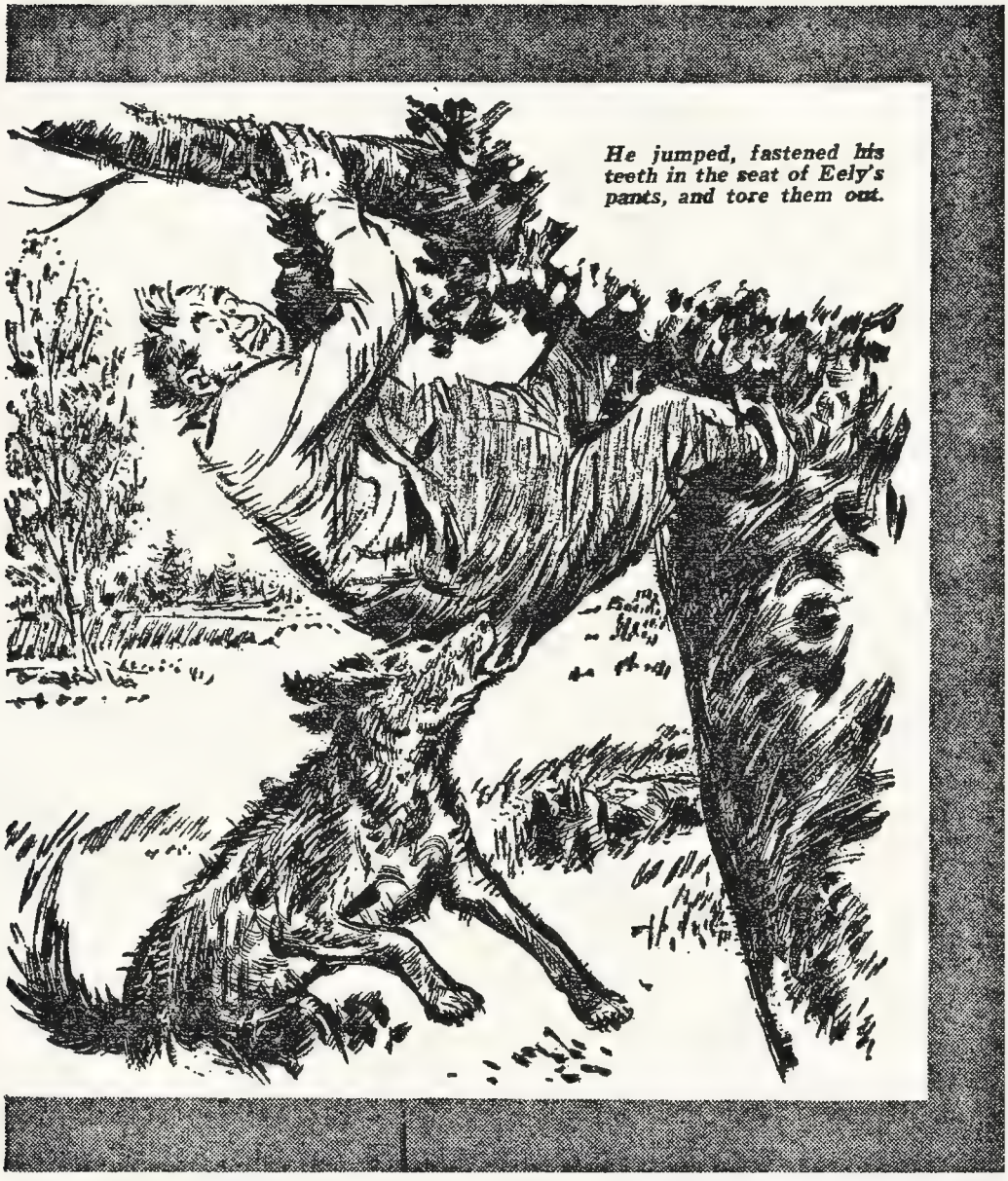
Jonah never afterward could bear to hear a loud laugh. Even if you were laughing at something else he'd turn pale and with a haunted look hurry away. You saw him around the mill and public places less and less.

So, the hacking match died with Mister Billie. For one thing, the people in the neighborhood began thinking differently and doing things they hadn't been doing. They patched roads and drained fields and went in for early trucking crops, potatoes and strawberries and cucumbers—things Mister Billie had preached for years. Somewhat later they dedicated a fine brick school. Jonah Rhyne never did go by to see it. It had big letters carved in stone: *Billie McVane Memorial School.* Miss Susan is as proud of it as pie.

A HOUND FOR SLEEPING

By

JIM KJELGAARD



He jumped, fastened his teeth in the seat of Eely's pants, and tore them out.

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

MY COUSIN George is the best hunter and fisherman in Wishiwara County. And you could tell that he was in for even more success when he brought the greyhound home from Mr. Tambley's.

He didn't go up to Mr. Tambley's to get the hound. He went there to hire Mr. Tambley, who lives on top of Two-Bird Mountain, to come down and cut the trees in our wood lot. George was going to cut them. But just one day before he was to start he had a bad fall and wrenched his back something terrible. So Dorothy, George's wife, gave George six dollars—which was half of Mr. Tambley's first week's wages—and sent him up to Two-Bird Mountain. While he was

gone that Eely Moxer came into the yard.

His right name is Eli, but everybody calls him Eely and I heard MacDonaldson say that's because he's slippery. He lives five farms below us and never does anything except fool around and trade, or sell things. He sold us—I work for George—a team of horses for two hundred dollars. Dorothy paid him a hundred that she saved out of her egg money. But the horses are wind-broke and have to stop every little while. George is mad about it. But Dorothy says anyone can make a mistake, and maybe Eely Moxer thought the horses were good when he sold them.

When he came in the yard this morning Dorothy invited him into the house for a glass of cider, and for a couple of minutes he sipped it. Then, "Where's that no-account man of yours?" he asked.

Dorothy whirled about so quick that I thought she'd knock the tea kettle off the stove, and put her hands on her hips.

"Eli!" she said. "You cannot run George down in my hearing. George does not work because he is sick or unfortunate all the time. If you say more things like that, I will throw you out of here!"

She could do it, too. She's bigger than Eely. He laughed, kind of nervous-like.

"No offense, Miz Dorothy. No offense meant."

"My cousin George is the kindest and best man in Wishiwara County!" I told that Eely Moxer.

"Alex," said Eely, "twelve year olds should speak when they are spoke to."

"That is right, Alex," Dorothy said. "And Eli said that he meant no offense."

Eely Moxer was going to say more. But just then George came into the yard.

MR. TAMBLEY wasn't with him. But the dog, just about the biggest I ever saw, was. It must have weighed a hundred and twenty pounds, had long gray fur, and a droopy kind of tail. George was leading it by a string around its neck and when he brought it into the house the dog looked at Eely and growled. Then it went over by the stove, and I never did see a dog lay down any quicker or go to sleep any easier.

"Why—where's Mr. Tambley?" Dorothy asked.

"He couldn't come on account he was busy," George said. "But he sold me this—" he pointed at the dog—"for six dollars."

"So—" and I don't just know why it was, but I had an idea that some things said about Eely Moxer might be true. He reminded me of a trapper about to set a trap. "So," he said again, "it don't look like much of a dog to me."

"Ha-ha!" George laughed. "Ha-ha-ha! That shows how much you know about genu-wine thoroughbred greyhounds!"

"How do you make out it's a greyhound?"

"It's grey and it's a hound ain't it?"

Eely Moxer kind of looked aside, and again I wanted to warn George to be careful. But after a second I knew that was foolish. George is certainly smarter than Eely. He can take care of himself.

"George," Eely said, "I—I hate to bring this up. But I have to have the money you owe me on those horses."

"Ha!" said George. "Same old Eely! Always lookin' for another penny to pinch. You will get your money. The sawmill down to Smartburg will pay two hundred dollars for the logs on my wood lot just as soon as I hire somebody to fell and trim them."

"Two hundred, eh?" Eely said, as though he liked the sound of it. He smiled, but George was getting madder by the minute—he don't like Eely.

"George," Eely said, "have you any other money in sight?"

"Have I? Huh! See that dog? Before the winter's over I'm goin' to bring in five hundred dollars' worth of fur with him! And every cent— half of it goes to Dorothy!"

"Oh George!" said Dorothy. "You're so good to me!"

But Eely Moxer was smiling sort of sad-like. He reminded me of the preacher down to Smartburg.

"George," he said, "that dog will not chase anything. Do not depend on him."

"Ha!" George said. "I can see how jealous you are because you ain't got him!"

"George," Eely sounded awful sad, "I undestand that you know all about dogs, and I'm foolish to go against you. But I like a sportin' chance. You owe me a hundred on the team, and I'll put another hundred with it. I'll fell and trim the trees in your wood lot, and bet the two

hundred against them, that the dog never chases anything at all. We should have some time limit, so he's gotta chase something within a week."

"That's a bet!" said George.

"Oh dear!" Dorothy said. "We have to have that wood money to meet the payment on our farm."

George—he sure thinks a lot of Dorothy—just patted her on the shoulder. "My little girl," he said, "my dear little girl. Do not worry. The man of the family should handle this."

Eely Moxer was smirking awful wide when he left the house.

"Win or lose I'll have to fell those trees," he said. "I might as well get my ax and start."

George and the greyhound were too tired to go out again that day. But the next morning, after I had done the chores, I went back to the house to find George eating the eight pork chops that Dorothy had cooked for him. The greyhound was still sleeping behind the stove. But there was an empty plate on the floor and the four pounds of chopped meat that Dorothy had been keeping in the ice box wasn't there any more. George smiled at me.

"Well, Alex," he said, "this is the day we go out."

"We?" I asked him.

"Yes, Alex," George said. "I must have a witness when the greyhound chases something. You lead him."

George is certainly good to me! I am supposed to work eight hours a day on his farm, and here he was taking me hunting. When we'd finished eating I went over to wake the greyhound up. I think that it must have been very tired because, even after I had worked about fifteen minutes, it still slept. Finally I put the rope back on its neck and dragged it out the door. It growled a little. But just as soon as it felt the cold air it got up and followed us. You could easily tell that the greyhound was saving all its strength for hunting. When George and I started up the mountain in back of the barn it hung back, and I had to pull it up the steep places. But by and by we got it to the top of the mountain.

"Let the greyhound go," George said. "It will find something to chase."

I took the rope off the greyhound's neck and it gave a little yelp. It leaped over a log about fifteen feet away and disappeared. George was smiling.

"Build me a fire, Alex, and wake me up when the greyhound bays its game."

I built a fire, and sat beside it listening for the greyhound. But, though I sat there all day, I did not hear him bay any game. It was towards evening when I woke George up.

"Where is the greyhound?" he asked.

"The last I saw he jumped over that log," I said.

"Go and look, Alex," George told me.

I looked. There, just on the other side of the log, the greyhound lay asleep in the dry leaves. I could see no tracks to prove that it had gone any farther, and told George so. He sort of bit his lip, and said that tomorrow was another day.

FOR six days, every day, we took the greyhound into the woods. But all it would hunt, even when a fox jumped right out from under its nose, was a place to sleep. By the end of the sixth day I saw that George was getting worried. We took the greyhound off the hill just as Eely Moxer was coming out of the wood lot.

"Ha!" Eely said. "You've got just one more day!"

When we got to the house MacDonaldson was there. He's our next door neighbor, and usually don't say much. But he started to laugh when he saw the dog.

"Who in thunder unloaded that on you?" he asked.

"Unloaded—" George started to say.

"Sure! Haw, haw, haw! Eely Moxer got it on a trade over in Garrett Valley, an' did everything he could to make it hunt! I've seen him wear a club to splinters on that dog! Finally, when he didn't dast go near it any more for fear it would chaw him, he sold it to Old Man Tambley for a bear dog! Haw, haw! That dog wouldn't chase a field mouse caught in a packin' box. All it wants to do is sleep! Haw, haw!"

The next morning George got up when Dorothy and I did. But I could see that he was not feeling well because, instead of his usual forty, he ate only twenty-two pancakes. Then he sat for a long while in his chair. Finally, "Come, Alex," he said.

(Continued on page 146)

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES

CERTIFIED SEAWORTHY

"The County Cork O'Boyles were always a gamblin' clan," he said. "I'll take my chances here — an' alone."

By STEVE HAIL

THE little monkey-faced coal passer came aboard with the rest of the skidrow drifters that seemed destined to fill out the crew list of the steam-schooner *Harawest*.

Captain David Wight didn't bother to look up as he handed this last man in line a pen, and finger-nailed the space marked "fireman" on the ship's articles. He began his pat speech and the words droned absently from his lips as he kept his head lowered, copying the duplicate articles.

"This is a delivery voyage only," he said. "You're signing on for a coastwise passage from San Francisco to Seattle, with return transportation to be settled upon by the master at—"

He stopped, conscious of stentorian breathing behind him, a breath heavy with the fumes of two-bit muscatel. The captain looked up sharply. He didn't have far to raise his eyes. The fireman's head, bald as an underdone bun, was scarcely more than five feet above the broken-toed shoes that shuffled for balance on the messroom deck. The man was not old, neither was he young. He had the agelessness of the red-head Irish. Also he was blind drunk, asleep on his feet.

Captain Wight frowned. "Name?" he barked irritably.

The fireman's lids lifted fractionally. "O'Boyle, sir," he said with a vacant grin. "Terence O'Boyle." Dimly-remembered

pride seemed to touch his voice as he added, "Of the County Cork O'Boyles, sir."

Wight grunted and bent over the articles again. "Wages are to be double the accepted scale," he went on. "Overtime will be—"

O'Boyle hiccuped and recovered. "Wages, sir? Double?" His eyes opened now to startling blueness, fixed on the captain. "Why? Is it Santa Claus you're fixin' to be?"

Wight didn't smile at the frail jest. He recognized the inborn suspicion of all sailors regarding wages and sailing conditions. He said bluntly, "Because the Steamboat Inspectors won't issue a seaworthiness certificate, and the underwriters won't insure. The engine's as old as the original boilers of hell. The hull's as unstable as a kettle—and as thin. They've washed their hands of the *Harawest*."

HE LEANED back, waiting for the fireman to turn on his heel and leave. It was a bluff but effective way of weeding out the worst of the derelicts, and it was clear that this rum-pot coal passer wouldn't be hard to discourage.

O'Boyle reached a shaking but determined hand for the pen. "It's signin' on, I am," he said throatily, and he seemed somehow more sober.

Wight thought for a quick second that the light behind the glazed film of the other's eyes might be tacit acceptance of the challenge, but more likely it was agreed for the extra wages.

"Identification?" the captain demanded, as much in pique as surprise. God knows, he'd shipped too many of these hiring-hall winos as it was. "Seaman's papers?"

The fireman plucked at the pocket of his hickory shirt and fumbled a folded square of paper to the table. Accumulated dirt and pocket lint fell from its creases as Wight unfolded it.

The captain started in spite of himself as he flattened it out on the table. It was a chief engineer's ticket, any ocean, any tonnage, but it obviously had been long since it had been framed behind the protecting glass of a license rack. He felt O'Boyle's eyes hard on his own when he drew in his breath in involuntary suspicion.

"It's mine," the fireman spoke up challengingly. "You'll be findin' me fingerprints on the back."

Wight turned the ticket over. The prints were there all right, along with listed suspensions that all but covered the back of it. The reasons appearing most frequently, he noticed, were for drunkenness and dereliction of duty.

"Well?" O'Boyle asked truculently.

The captain sighed. "I believe you," he said. "Ever sail on it? A Chief's billet has advantages over the black gang's foc'sle."

Wight thought there was wistfulness under O'Boyle's lowering lids, but when he spoke, the fireman's voice was bitter. "With suspensions like those plastered all over it?" he asked. "A man gets a reputation."

The captain nodded. That was understandable. There weren't many companies would hire a drunken chief, no matter how good an engineer he might be. But still, any kind of a licensed man should do better than . . .

"Why you shipping on this broken-down old hooker, O'Boyle?" He rapped out the question suddenly, without warning.

The fireman's expression didn't change, except for an almost imperceptible wrinkling of his drink-loosened lips that might have been a smile. "Money," he said. "Sure, and a man's gotta have it to eat—and drink."

Captain Wight had seen men lie before. "Why?" he shot out again.

The fireman shrugged and the motion threw him off balance. He caught at the table's edge, and the slackness was gone abruptly from his mouth. "This was my first job," he said evenly. "It's passing coal, I was, on here, a dozen years ago—till I got fired." His eyes held Wight's. "That's why I'm back. Call it first love."

"So," Captain Wight sneered finally in the silence, "I've shipped a sentimentalist? I need men to keep that crippled mill below decks turning over regular. Instead I get a waterfront gas-hound with a maudlin memory!"

O'Boyle's bleary eyes sparked quick anger. "Maybe it's both you're gettin'!" he snapped. "From what I've seen of your crew, you're needin' a bargain. Is it shippin' I am, or not?"

The captain came to his feet, blood flaming in his cheeks. "I ought to kick your wine-soaked carcass down the plank," he grated, then his voice softened menacingly. "But if I know the *Harawest*, this'll be worse. And I need firemen. Get your gear aboard, fellow. We're getting underway tonight. Be aboard—and sober!"

The fireman rocked perilously on his heels. He flashed Wight a vacuous grin and lurched toward the door. He staggered and nearly fell, caught at the door casing just in time and disappeared around the corner of the deckhouse.

Captain David Wight stared at the blank doorway thoughtfully. O'Boyle was drunk, but not that drunk. After awhile he went up to the chartroom and rummaged through the musty, mildewed logbooks that recorded the schooner's past.

THE *Harawest* went to sea. O'Boyle wasn't sober, and neither was anyone else. Captain Wight wasn't surprised. The whole performance was routine, a thing to be expected from the dross he had hired.

For awhile he had entertained hopes of procuring competent men. That had died when the *Harawest's* reputation had preceded him to the hiring hall. The applicants were for the most part derelicts either lured by the double wages, or the pressing necessity of shipping or starving. A berth on the steam-schooner had been merely less of a risk than the latter.

True, he had signed on half a dozen youngsters, U. S. O. commandos to whom this delivery job meant adventure, but who would become as useless as skys'ls on a Cunarder when the going got tough. But they were young, with strength in their bones—if it didn't vanish when the *Harawest* sank the coast under for her needed offing. There was hope in them, though, unlike the misfits that manned the engine room. O'Boyle for one, and the white-haired Chief who looked as if he might have fired on Robert Fulton's pride and joy. The assistant engineers, too, the first mate with the greasy serge uniform stretching across his pot belly like a worn girdle, and the Second . . .

The overdue jingle of the engine-room telegraph relieved the captain's mental review of personalities and left him mulling in a void of silence as the *Harawest's* engine sighed and died. Instinctively, his eyes swept the inshore horizon for sight of land. There was nothing but the undulating swells of the placid Pacific. His sigh of relief echoed that of the engine's. Sea room was the one thing they needed during the course of these unpredictable breakdowns—unless it was good engineers.

A scorching stream of epithets came up the voice tube in answer to his anxious questions. Interspersed with the curses, Wight singled out the words "circulator" and "couple of hours" as the most pertinent. He settled back against the bridge railing to wait. This was routine, too.

It was routine, also, four days and three breakdowns later when they caught the sou'wester. Barring God's favor and a complete overhaul it would have been a miracle if they hadn't. On the west coast in the winter, and logging a dawdling three knots it was only a matter of their time and luck running out. They both had, simultaneously.

Captain Wight watched worriedly as the dawn came in over a vast unrest of sea with combers like white-maned centaurs charging down on their quarter. The *Harawest*, unable to keep pace, yawed and bucked to the onrushing ridges of water as they raced her squat counter and beyond. Wight hauled the vessel two full points outside the course to be made good, clawing for sea room and hoping it would compensate for their leeway. On the altered course the old schooner took the weather almost abeam and she groaned in every timber.

By the change of watch at eight o'clock they had lost the portside lifeboat, fifty feet of maindeck railing, and the helmsman. The youthful adventurer at the wheel had turned gray, changing to green under his ears and looked at Wight with the pleading eyes of a wounded doe. A moment later he was in the scuppers of the bridge wing, retching and rolling in the water banked up against the weatherbreak. He made no attempt to return to the helm, or even to arise.

The captain took the wheel and waited for a relief, either the eight-to-twelve seaman or the mate. Neither and no one appeared. So far as he could determine from the little world surrounding him, the *Harawest* was a deserted ship.

THE wind increased, until by mid-morning it was a full gale. The glass, Wight knew, must be touching bottom. He didn't dare leave the wheel to look. The seas, ugly gray and mottled green were masthead high as the schooner tobogganed into the troughs. The smoke of driven spray from off the crests cut the visibility down to a bare two miles, even when they were borne dizzily to the tops of the racing graybeards.

An hour later the captain, concerned with how long the aged hull could stand up under the twisting, weaving strain of their motion, watched his chance and began the fight to urge the reluctant bows around into the wind. It was better to heave-to and chance the battering they'd have to take, than be rolled under when a grandfather caught them abeam.

They had nearly made it when Wight saw the dreaded granddaddy roaring down upon them like an unloosed avalanche, cross-trees high. Even as tried to fight the little vessel around to meet it, he knew instinctively that only a prayer could save them. He prayed, fast and ardently.

That was about all he remembered. There was the mountain of boarding water exploding like a bomb-burst, and the hurled spray dimming the sunlight to milky twilight. There was green water cascading aft, uprooting every unsolid thing in its path. Wight was knocked from his feet, his fingers clutching futilely at the wheel. He was thrown head on into a stanchion guarding a corner of the bridge.

He lay where he had fallen, and in his struggle for returning consciousness his first awareness was of the easier motion of the schooner. She wasn't slamming into it any more, or rolling her rails under in the unchecked careening movements of the broadsiding seas. There was an odd, unnatural silence, too, except for the wild scream of the wind tearing at the standing rigging. There was . . . And it came to him then, the explanation for the silence. The familiar stamping vibration of the engine had stopped. He fought to clear the webs of concussion from his brain, to open his eyes, to arise, to be rid of the giant hand that seemed to be pounding at his head with purposeful blows.

His lids parted finally, slowly and unwillingly, and he stared up at a madman beating at him with methodical fury. He struggled to get up, to ward off the maniacal fists—and saw that it was O'Boyle. Or what had been O'Boyle. The fireman was kneeling over him, slapping him back to consciousness, shouting at him, demanding that he awaken.

The little Irishman's face was a bloody, coal-grimed mask of swollen flesh. One sleeve was burned away, revealing a shoulder and upper arm charred to a scorched mass of festering tissue.

Wight clawed his way to his feet, holding to the bridge railing for support. "For God's sake," he cried wildly, "wh-what's happened?"

O'Boyle's pulped lips cracked in what could have been a grin. "Took one over," he said. "We've got a ton of water down a smashed ventilator. Washed out the fires. I've had a time. It's help I'm needin' down there, bad."

Wight loosed one hand to wipe across his clouded eyes. He saw now why the *Harawest* was easier. They were running before mountainous seas, with their dead propeller acting as a drag, holding their stern up to the pursuing combers. They were lurching, swooping, flying northeast—toward the land. His mind raced frantically, trying to remember how far off the shore they had been when he'd been stricken down.

"Where—where are we?" he asked dazedly. t

O'Boyle's grimace this time was a definite grin. "That's your department, Cap," he said. "What I'm wantin' is help to get that dime store jewelry going down below."

Wight's eyes were open now, but still puzzled. "Help?" he asked. "Where's the engineers, the oilers and the firemen, the . . ."

O'Boyle arched a blackened thumb inward. "You're lookin' at 'em, Cap. The Chief's lying on the fiddley gratings with a broken hip, implorin' somebody to save him. That greasy First Assistant's vomiting in his pillow and crying for his wife and children. He wants to die. And I couldn't pry the Third's hands loose from his bunk rails with a pinch bar. Thim that aren't sick an' holdin' their heads are prayin'. As if the Chief Stoker would

be after savin' the likes o' thim. It's sick I am, too, but it be n't my head." He waited expertly for the plummeting bows to give him a lee, then spat disgustedly to the deck.

The captain looked wonderingly at the weazened fireman, then beyond him to where a spouting column of spray suddenly erupted high over the jagged washboard of the sea. Up there ahead, and not far distant, something was interrupting the untrammeled procession of waves piling in behind them. In this latitude, Wight knew, there were no offshore obstructions. Those geysering seas meant only one thing, the coast of the mainland, closing fast.

He looked at O'Boyle. "I never fired a boiler in my life," he said quietly. "It's time I learned."

THE engine room was a madhouse. The floor plates sloshed shin-deep under water. Lethal shovels, slice-bars and hoes leaped out of the darkness at them every time the ship plunged down the sidehill of a sea. Wight helped where he could, drawing the soaked clinkers, cleaning the ash pits, groveling for fresh coal through the bunker gates whenever the hampering water rushed across to the far side of the compartment. Once he was thrown against the fire doors and held there till the schooner rolled back. Mercifully they had cooled. He understood now the raw burn on O'Boyle's body. The doors had been ruby hot then. He looked at the little Irishman wonderingly.

The fireman was a demon in a hell of his own making, laying the new fires, priming them with oil-soaked wood, coaling them, nursing them to life and coaxing the steam pressure upward on the gauges. Once he sent Wight topside to an upper deck locker for dry waste and kerosene. Out of a porthole the captain saw the bursting breakers of the coastline to starboard and close ahead. Their thunder, muted by the gale blowing onshore and away from them, rolled back like distant cannon fire across the shrinking acres of water. Wight felt the tightening fingers of fear on his throat as he hurried below. Time was short.

O'Boyle, his burned arm crooked around the big reversing wheel, glanced at the steam gauge, then at Wight. "Forty pounds," he said. "Enough for the auxiliaries. We ought to wait for the pumps to catch up on this slop before it washes thim fires out again. How much time will I be havin'?"

The captain tried to speak and couldn't. The booming surf was no longer muffled, and he knew it could be only minutes before they'd be walking on fanged rocks come up to meet them through the thin-skinned planking of the bilges.

O'Boyle saw his answer in the captain's eyes, and heard it above the hiss of the fires and the wailing of the gale on the decks above. Deliberately he knocked the jamming lever free and spun the massive hand wheel. He nodded to Wight. A sore and grimy hand went quickly to the throttle lever.

"Get up on the bridge," he said, "where you belong. We'll need a man at the helm. I'm rollin' the main engine. Go on, get goin'."

"I'll help," the captain said. "It'll take time to crack the main stop and warm the lines."

"I'm not warmin' anything," the little Irishman snarled. "An engine's no good with a boulder nudgin' it through the overhead. An' I want steam, not blatherin'. Get topside!"

Captain Wight smiled slowly and shook his head. "No," he said. "I'll stay here. I've read the log of the *Harawest*. A dozen years ago somebody poured steam to a cold system, like you're planning to do now. A line let go. Live steam. Five men died down here."

O'Boyle slid his tongue across the caked blood of his lips.

"Ain't five enough?" he asked bitterly. "The fireman that killed 'em was Terry O'Boyle. The log didn't tell you that! He'd been too busy with a bottle. I ain't fryin' any more men. That's why I shipped on here, knowin' the engine—and the crew. You called it sentiment, Cap, remember? I call it conscience. Get outa here!"

"But you . . ." Wight began.

O'Boyle said, "The hiring halls of the world are filled with wino firemen the likes o' me. But there's always need of a shipmaster with guts. Get out!"

Wight's foot, planted on the first rung of the ladder, dropped back to the slosh-

ing floor plates. "No," he said stubbornly. "I'll stick."

O'Boyle waited for the *Harawest* to roll, then plunged a hand into the tangle of debris sliding past. He came up with a slice-bar in his fisted hand and advanced toward Wight.

"The County Cork O'Boyles were always a gamblin' clan," he said. "I'll take my chances here. An' alone." He shifted the heavy bar in his grip. "An' too, the O'Boyles weren't havin' much of a childhood. We niver learned to play too much at games."

The bar struck sparks on the ladder a scant inch from the captain's head as the full heft of the fireman's good arm swung in a short arc. If that wasn't enough, the wild light in the Irishman's eyes was. Wight started up the ladder, two rungs at a time, but not too fast to see O'Boyle, with a tight smile on his homely face, spinning the valve handle of the main stop, fast.

The captain was in the fore and aft alleyway, running for the bridge ladder, when the water hammer ahead of O'Boyle's loosed steam struck a bend in the line. A sledging shudder ran through the deckhouse and Wight waited, not breathing, for the sibilant rush of escaping steam. And for the accompanying scream of the fireman when the blast enveloped him. There was only the lessening rumble of warming steel as the pipe absorbed the load, and O'Boyle's Gaelic curses prying the crank off dead center. And finally there was the soft ker-chunking of the propeller as the fireman fed power to the engine.

Wight breathed again and ran for the wheelhouse.

The coast was a curtain of fountaining water ahead when he reached the wheel. There wasn't time, he saw, to wait for a lesser sea in which to swing. He put the helm hard down, and hung on. In seeming thankfulness for a chance at life the schooner buried her snout, shoveled a mountain of solid water aside, lay over on her panting sides and came up, bows to the weather and ploughing doggedly ahead.

Captain Wight waited for his throat muscles to relax, took a couple of deep breaths, then leaned over the engine-room voice tube.

"We've got her made," he shouted down, "if you can keep that engine running."

An indignant snort came back. "Runnin'?" O'Boyle yelled. "I cut me teeth on the likes o' this one. Just keep her stack out of the sea!"

CAPTAIN David Wight was still at the wheel twenty-one hours later when the *Harawest* rounded Tatoosh and straightened out for the sheltered run down the Sound.

With the steam-schooner leveled off in the calmer waters and the engine beating out an acceptable cadence, Terry O'Boyle dragged himself up the ladder to the bridge. He clutched an oil-stained pilot biscuit in his fist.

"The First's down below," he explained. "Brass buttons 'n all. He don't want to die any more."

The two men stared ahead in the silence of complete exhaustion. Finally the captain spoke. "I'm going south for another delivery job in a week or so," he said casually. "And after that one, there'll be others. I'll be needing a good chief engineer."

O'Boyle nibbled at the biscuit. "Yeah, but you'll be needin' a Chief who can keep his jib out of a wine barrel, I'm thinkin', judgin' from the hookers you deliver."

Wight wrung a grin out of the tired muscles of his mouth.

"I'm counting on that, O'Boyle. You'll have troubles enough with the barrel of bolts they have for engines without thinking of bottles."

O'Boyle gave up on the biscuit. He threw it over the side and watched it thoughtfully as it drifted astern. Below decks the old one-lunger pounded out its asthmatic rhythm.

The little Irishman started an answering grin, then winced at the pain in his battered face. He chuckled instead, and said, "Sure, and I'm thinkin' you're right, Captain Wight. It's an engineer you've hired then."

He paused, thinking. Then his puffed cheek bulged his eyes closed in a swollen wink as he added a condition.

"Providin' I double as fireman if needed," he said.

THE SECRET OF THE BOWIE KNIFE

A Fact Story

By EVERETT M. WEBBER

DECORATION BY PETER KUHLHOFF

MANY stories are told of the origin of the bowie knife and of how it came to be named after one or another of the Bowie brothers—James, Reason, and John. As a matter of fact, the first one was made by an Arkansas smith, who seems to have discovered the secret of Damascus steel, for James Bowie.

All that is known of the process is that the smith, James Black, put his steel through about a dozen tempering processes, but no one was able to discover just what they were.

Born in 1800 in New Jersey, he ran away from home at the age of eight, worked for ten years with a silversmith, and migrated to the frontier. Presently ending up in Hempstead County, Arkansas, he fell in love with Anne Shaw, a daughter of the blacksmith with whom he had found work. Shaw, rejecting him as a nameless nobody, tried to break off the match, but with the girl's promise to wait, Black moved westward to the Cassatot River and had a fair little settlement going when word came—along with orders to move—that the land had been given to the Indians by President Jackson. He lost all his work, and still owed for labor.

Back in Hempstead County he opened a smithy and married Anne in spite of her father's protests and started paying off his debts. The knives he made helped a lot, for they brought from five dollars up to more than fifty.

Such was his reputation for making knives that James Bowie—already known as a fighter—left an order for one when he came through Black's town, Washington, Arkansas. Black did not care for the pattern Bowie drew, and when Bowie returned several months later Black showed him an additional knife, at the same price, that he had made. Bowie chose it and a few days later killed three men with it when they attacked him. Orders began coming in for "a knife like Bowie's." Of course, it was the temper of the metal which made it so valuable.

After the loss of his wife, Black was very low with a fever, and was blinded when his father-in-law came in and beat him about the head with a club. An inept doctor destroyed all hope of his regaining his sight, and his father-in-law appropriated his estate while he was off seeing this doctor. He lived then, for more than thirty years, with Dr. Isaac Jones who had migrated from Bowie County, Texas, to Arkansas. Dr. Jones was at first interested in trying to restore his sight, but even after this proved to be hopeless he kept Black on as a friend of the family, and the smith often stated he would bequeath them his process for tempering steel.

Finally realizing he had not much longer to live, he called for writing materials, and for hours he struggled at recalling the secret. Eventually, he had to confess that he could not, and the realization broke his mind. He died two years later, and the secret went with him. James Bowie had died years before at the Alamo, with the knife in his hand that Black had made for him.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

When I jerked Professor Alvin G. Braden—the poor sap—loose from the middle of the fracas in which he'd got himself involved at the Las Tres Cruces bar in Mexico City, I might have known he'd show his gratitude by handing me a load of trouble. . . . His story had long gray hair on it. He was an archaeologist and had a lot of moth-eaten sheets of Aztec maguey paper that told him where there was a cache of fabulous treasure!

I told him, "Brother, fourteen million people in Mexico have been digging for Aztec treasure ever since Cortez and they've got the land sieved about three feet deep. That's why they raise such good fruit."

But you can't eradicate the bug out of a treasure hunter any more than you can malaria. He insisted I play along with him and carry on the good work I'd started in the *cantina muchacharia* of being his guardian angel.

"XIPE THE SKINLESS"

By GORDON MacCREAGH

—lets you in on what the upshot was after I said O. K. and succumbed to the wiles of this wacky ghoul from Harvard and started out to shepherd him through the jungles of the Totonac tribe. Some fun!

Plus another thrilling story of the dirt-track auto races by Coleman Meyer . . . A gripping yarn of our post-war Merchant Marine by Albert Richard Wetjen . . . Jim Kjelgaard's "Charley Hoe Handle and the Spirit Wolf" which brings back your favorite Injun—Warden Horse Jenkins still scalp-hungry on his heels . . . Another stirring novelette of the U. S. Air Mail in the diaper stage of the 20's—"And to Hell with the Pilots!" by A. A. Caffrey . . . The next instalment of Bob Pinkerton's epic novel of Alaska, "Salmon Sweepstakes" . . . Plus fact stories by Byron Dalrymple and others, and the usual unusual assortment of informative departments and features you'll find each month only in—

25c

ON SALE APRIL 11th

(Continued from page 6)

Like a good many thousand *Adventure* readers I've seen the ruined cities of Europe and all I wish is that people would stop doing such things.

AND Bob Pinkerton, also absent from these pages for too many years, jots down the following to bridge the gap between "The Stranger in the Canoe" back in our January 1940 issue and "Salmon Sweepstakes" which gets under way on page 86 this month.

The first Pinkerton yarn in *Adventure* was bought by Arthur Hoffman in 1915. Kathrene and I were writing together then. *Camp-Fire* ceased trying to keep track of us a long time ago. On our last appearance in this department we were living in a log cabin in the Canadian bush. After five years of canoe, dog team and trap we started motor touring before there were paved roads. Lived in the Rockies a year and then tried nearly every section of California. Next we bought a boat and lived aboard it most of the time for seven years, going to Alaska in the summer and spending winters in British Columbia. Investigated forty-four salmon streams in Southeastern Alaska, knew many trollers, purse seiners, canners, halibut men, trappers, handloggers and prospectors. Back to California again and a year in the Mother Lode, land of the Forty-niners.

By that time roads were paved nearly everywhere and we started moving again. Have hit every state but three, have lived in Florida and the State of Washington, Maine and Hollywood and a lot of places in between. The war caught us in New York.

"Salmon Sweepstakes" was set in 1921 for several reasons. That was a year when, as a result of the post-war crash, salmon canneries in Southeastern Alaska could be bought for a small percentage of cost. Eighty canneries were operated in 1920, thirty in 1921. A two-line cannery costing $50,000 could be bought for $15,000 or even less. Thus it was the one season when a young chap with a little capital could get into the game.

He was by no means sure of success however, with two strikes against him before he put a fish in a can. First, the government had removed all wraps during the war and had urged canners to pack to the limit. That they did, as any soldier in World War I can testify. But the government bought far more than it needed and dumped its holdings on the market. The price dropped to new lows, there was a big carry-over, and men who put up the 1920 pack held the bag. They dropped like flies and, with the big carry-over and cheap government salmon on the market, there was little hope a man wouldn't lose everything in 1921.

A second strike against a young canner was the problem of filling his cans. The pink salmon, or humpback, or humpie, forms a large percentage of the catch in Southeast and it is strictly a two-year fish. That is, fish spawned in 1947 will return in 1949 as sure as the sun rises, and the number of fish to return in 1949 depends almost entirely on the number of fish permitted to escape to the spawning grounds in 1947. What this number would be in 1921, no man could tell, but the chances were slim.

When the government removed restrictions in 1917, canners in Southeast packed 2,149,075 cases of pinks, or 103,155,580 cans, nearly a million cases more than had ever been packed before. They packed 2,034,997 cases in 1918 but, as a result of the big catch in 1917, only 1,521,897 in 1919. That was a warning signal, and it rang again in 1920 when the pink salmon pack in Southeast was only 1,026,862 cases. In other words, both odd- and even-year runs had been seriously depleted and a young fellow starting out in 1921, no matter how cheaply he got his cannery, didn't have much of a chance. In fact, the pink pack in 1921 was 416,958 cases, the lowest in Southeast since 1906.

Another reason for choosing 1921 was that, combined with the above, which would be tough enough for any hero, it was the last ticklish year before the passage of the White Act in June, 1924. Under this law the government took over almost complete supervision of salmon fishing. It had power to close areas that were overfished so they might build up again, cut down length of the fishing season and many other things. As administered by Henry O'Malley, it became as fine a conservation project as the government ever put into operation and probably was responsible for saving the salmon industry. If the law had been in effect in 1921, our hero probably could not have operated because his district was depleted.

He might have had trouble too with his Chickwan trap. In the early days far more traps were permitted than now. There was nothing to stop a man from putting in a trap if he kept away from a river mouth and was not within 1,800 feet of another trap. For years men prospected for trap sites until at last all worth while ones were taken. Both canners and independent owners held them and in some instances profits were large. Though floating traps cost from $5,000 to $15,000 and pile traps as high as $25,000 or more, many made enormous catches. The Anan trap took a million pinks annually for years. The Sawyer-McKay trap is said to have done the same. Many others caught 500,000 and on up. Some trap sites owned by independents were sold to canners for $100,000 and one brought $125,000. However, scores of traps never paid the cost of installation.

As for the Chickwan trap, ruined by a blocked river, such instances are not only possible but have happened. If a man found such a site and didn't act the hog, let fifty percent of the fish pass up the river, he'd have a gold mine for his lifetime. But other factors can ruin a fish run or a season, for nature takes a hand too. Heavy fall rains

will wash out eggs. Too heavy an escapement will cause overseeding, which means the gravel bars are filled with eggs and succeeding fish, in digging new nests, bury or wash out those eggs already laid. Blank years, even in the old days forty years ago, occurred without logical explanation.

With firm government regulation and the great expense of equipment for modern salmon catching and canning, the young fellow with a few thousands hasn't a chance now. The tendency is toward ownership of canneries by large companies, whereas in the early days many independents operated single plants. But a bad year, which may be due to depletion, nature or post-war conditions, can easily wipe out a small cannei while a large company, with capital and a spread over two or three areas, will pull through.

Still another factor that makes salmon packing one of the big gambles is the fact that the ultimate sale price of the product is never known. Capital, effort and the vast experience necessary to understand fish are expended to the limit while the canner is wholly in the dark as to the odds. Not until a few months before he starts the next season can he know whether he has won or lost. It takes a man born to the game to play it.

E. HOFFMANN PRICE appends an illuminating footnote to accompany his novelette, "Escape to Palembang," which opens this issue. He writes—

The following, translated from Dutch accounts of the old-fashioned methods of tin mining, may be of interest.

"The layers rich in tin ore are under more or less thick sterile layers which form valleys called *kollongs,* necessitating deep digging. Only recently developments of the tin mines in the *kollong* terrain in Banka have been replaced by more up-to-date methods. The following is a description of the primitive mining method—

"The mines are open pits. It is first necessary, of course, to clear the land of trees. After this is done, the river water is utilized for flushing away the masses of soil on top of the layers containing the ore. The ore-bearing sand is carried out to canals for washing, the running water separating and cleaning the ore from the sand and other materials. Whenever possible, the topsoil layer is flushed away into old shafts to fill these up. Ordinarily the soil is removed through the water-flushing method, up to one meter in depth. After that, it is removed by baskets carried on a yoke by the workers.

"First, the earth carried out is deposited around the pit to protect the new shaft from the streams. The waste material is terraced, the workers climbing up the terraces along tree trunks in which steps have been cut. The ore containing soil is washed in canals lined with wood. These canals are several tens of meters in length, and three quarters to one and a half meters in width. The washing process continues until the heavier part containing ore is separated from the rest of the material.

"Smelting was done in an oven heated by burned wood. The smelting was usually done during the night because of the tremendous heat. Following the smelting, the unpurified tin was poured into blocks or bricks to be refined later. . . ."

The above was placed at my disposal by the Netherlands Information Bureau, to which organization I am likewise indebted for reports on current conditions in the Indies. I wish to add, and with all respect to my generous informants, that I have used native-smelted tin which apparently needed no purification after the primitive process above described. The tin in question came in bars whose shape and markings indicated that the moulds had been made by thrusting driftwood into sand. The grain and texture of well-weathered wood was unmistakable; and clearly indicative of the most primitive of smelting procedure. This tin, however, was so pure that I had no trouble at all in "tinning" the inner surfaces of copper pots used for cooking rice, and the brass pots used in Syria for making coffee. However, such tin may not be sufficiently pure for our modern industrial methods.

In view of day-to-day changes in the political situation in the Indies, I used a fictitious island whose position and topography are consistent with the "tin belt" reaching from the Malay Peninsula through the Riouw Archipelago, and on the Banka and Billiton. This belt of islands is off the Sumatra Coast. As for the disorders and lawless bands: these existed in the autumn of 1946, and in all probability still exist, despite recent improvements in the situation. Consider how long renegades and outlaws posing as patriots kept things in an uproar in Mindanao and other islands of the Philippine Archipelago; the "Black Popes" of Samar are an example, and so are the diverse *datus* and self-styled sultans who furnished plenty of exercise for both the U. S. Army and the Philippine Scouts.

So much for disorders in *outlying* parts. Dr. P. J. Koets, Chief of Cabinet for Dr. H. J. van Mook, Acting Governor General of the Netherlands Indies, headed a delegation which visited key points of Republican Java, and came back with a report which speaks well indeed for the Republic, and for Soekarno's progress. The entire report strikes me as being as much a tribute to Dutch fair-mindedness and realism, as it is to Indonesian potentialities for establishing a worthwhile Indonesian Republic. I quote a few significant phrases: ". . . the picture in general is of a society that is consolidating itself. . . . A society that is consolidating itself is *not* in course of dissolution. I am fully aware that these words may shock you, and that you may be incredulous and reluctant to believe what appears in such conflict with much news we hear or read. . . . I

won't overestimate, but I won't underestimate either, this element of quiet and peacefulness. I want to emphasize that even the Indonesian authorities admit that this is a recent development. . . Things are going in the right direction. . . . In many respects, the plus factors are beginning to win over the opposing forces. . ."

"Escape to Palembang" is based on the existence of disorders in *outlying* parts of the Indies' enormous extent; the story is no more imperialist propaganda than are our yarns of the "Wild West" and its disorders in the days when our own republic was consolidating itself.

Now, one more bit of documentation: I have searched the files till I am dizzy, but can not find the newsclipping referring to the motorization of one or more Lancer regiments on the Northwest Frontier of India. This was pre-war: and a motorized Lancer was something to contemplate. Mr. Dibble of course is a fictitious person. However, he is based on the personality of an old friend, whose doings in the Boer War, and whose attitudes concerning nearly everything, make Mr. Dibble a drab and prosaic chap, without a trace of eccentricity.

Can any *Camp-Fireman* recall the details of the motorization of those Lancer regiments on India's Northwest Frontier? We can't seem to pin down the date and circumstance either.

SEVERAL new additions to the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month. Following *Camp-Fire* custom we'll turn the fueling over to the newcomers while they introduce themselves and their work.

Edward B. Reynolds, who gives us "A Head for Uncle Joe" on page 73, says—

I was born in Anaconda, Montana, home of the world's largest copper smelter, and am a graduate of Montana State University. Prior to the War when I crossed over to the other side of the mountain I could be classed as a Montana hill billy, spending all my time in that section. Aside from such items as smelter work, fighting forest fires, etc., I put in about 15 years on Montana newspapers. Just before I got into the Army I was state director of the Montana WPA Writers' Project.

When I got into the Army they made a cryptographer out of me and put me in the Army Airways Communications System of the Air Force. Since then I have had no opportunity to return to my favorite mountain peak and relax in isolated imperturbability. Instead, I've ranged from the north pole to the equator.

I was one of the few survivors of the *Dorchester* when she was torpedoed off the coast of Greenland on February 3, 1943 with a loss of approximately seven hundred lives. I was picked up from a life raft after seven hours in Arctic waters suffering from immersion legs which still has me hobbling from time to time when the breeze comes in off Lake Michigan in Chicago where I now reside.

After I was brought to Greenland by the rescue ship, *Escanaba*, I stayed there for eight months until the weather thawed out enough and sufficient German subs were cleaned out to enable replacements to be brought in. Then there was a period of hospitalization in Coral Gables, Florida and living the life of Reilly in Miami Beach.

When the Army figured they had done enough for "Our Nell" they decided that considering the effect of the Arctic on me the best antidote would be the tropics where I could really thaw out. So I batted around Central America in Panama, Costa Rica, and Ecuador for 15 months. It was in Ecuador that I had my first experience with shrunken heads that resulted in the article, "A Head for Uncle Joe."

Because of the time spent around the mining camp of Butte, Montana I realized that all that glitters is not necessarily gold. An Ecuadorian friend tipped me off that shrunken heads weren't necessarily human—many of them were monkey heads or made from the skins of other animals. But I need not go into detail here; you have the story. Incidentally, when you get off the tourist trail in Central and South America you'll find the jungle country is still pretty rough.

Right now I'm busily pounding the typewriter, trying to make up for time lost during the period when the Army frowned upon writing by its cryptographers. I hope this will be the start of a beautiful friendship.

TIM PRIDGEN, whose amusing yarn of rural practical-jokery, Southern style, appears on page 112, writes—

"The Hacking Match" is a story which evolved from memories of my native Cape Fear River country in Eastern North Carolina, a land of tenuous drama, where nothing is forgotten, nothing quite finished, nothing quite escapes the eventual tolerance and good will of the people. The yarn is all fiction except for the one-time almost institutional jousts of rough and ready wit in the public places. Although I did have, as I wrote it, the nostalgic sense that it was quite true to the life as I knew it.

That was some time ago, as time flies, but, even so, you may be surprised, not unconnected with *Adventure*. It was one of my choice pleasures then, on a certain day of each month, to buy the book from the news butcher on the Shoo-fly, which came through every morning so strictly on time that people could, and did, set their clocks by its whistle. That, too, was adventure, a small boy dashing aboard those coal-smoky coaches, handing over money with trembling hand to the butch, while the great black locomotive fairly snorted to be on its way. I don't know what

dire thing might have happened if I had failed to make it back to the ground. Something awful. Anyway, I always got off. With *Adventure* then for two whole days I was able to gloat through African jungles, the wastes of Gobi and other romantic exploits of the most amazing and satisfying kind. I thought if I could write such a story I would be the world's proudest huckleberry picker. Little did I think then that a well-remembered, cypress-decorated mill pond also might in its own way have the flavor of adventure. I am real pleased.

I suppose a man never gets away from his boyhood. In almost everything I've done, excepting of course in newspaper work in Wilmington, Albemarle and Charlotte, in North Carolina, must be some part of the observations of youth. Certainly this is true of my historical novels "Tory Oath" and "West Goes the Road," (Doubleday) which were based on the country, and in one degree or another the same must apply to various magazine stories. And it is pursuit of somewhat the same historical strain that has brought Mrs. Pridgen and me here now to the mountains of East Tennessee for purposes of research.

EVERETT M. WEBBER, whose little article on the origins of the Bowie knife on page 131 may, we supect, arouse considerable controversy and expressions of divers opinion from students of Border history, writes on joining us for the first time—

> Although I am a very peaceable character personally, I like to read and write of swashbucklers, and it was while doing research for a story with an American history background for another publication that I began gathering notes on the Bowie saga. One of the nice things about historicals is that you can hardly gather the dope for one without getting plots or fact stuff for further stories or articles.
>
> The Bowie piece for *Adventure* is the type which is very hard to run down to complete accuracy, concerning, as it does, an American hero at even whose birthdate and birthplace we must guess. Conflicting accounts place the making of the first Bowie knife in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas, but weighing one thing with another convinces me that the account as I have given it has a greater ring of authenticity and more collateral evidence to back it up than the fragmentary bits I have picked up as to other origins of the knife.
>
> At any rate, Bowie was a man of courage and initiative—enough so that he figures as a character in a novel which my wife, Olga, and I are writing, to be published by Dutton, of the early days of the Louisiana Purchase. There is some reason to believe that he had pneumonia at the time of the Alamo and did his fighting from a cot on that ill-fated day.
>
> As to myself, I was born in Mississippi 37 years ago. Since then I have saw-milled, brick-planted, school-taught, farmed, and, during the process, picked up a couple of academic degrees, a wife (we mutually aid and abet each other in the writing game) and two children. We now live on top of a mountain in the Ozarks.

Artist Pete Kuhlhoff, who drew the knife that accompanies the Webber text, queried the spelling of Bowie's brother's name. Pete says he's seen it "Rezon" rather than "Reason" elsewhere. And we discovered that in the Bowie article in the "Encyclopedia Britannica" it's given as "Rezin." We asked Mr. Webber how come he picked "Reason" and he writes—

> I am interested in what Mr. Kuhlhoff has to say about the name of Bowie's brother. Unless "Rezon" is translatable into some foreign word or can be traced to some root word in another language, I should think it a rule-of-thumb spelling of "Reason," but as far as the facts are concerned I don't know anything about them. I have seen only the latter spelling. Names of that category were once quite common, as you doubtless have noticed. For instance, Ethan Allen had a cousin named Remember.
>
> The Bowies probably had little or no schooling—perhaps just enough to do a little phonetic spelling, or perhaps someone taught them the spelling of their names. Someone who had just a little learning. In the Ozarks, as high as twenty-seven variations of the spelling of the same family name may be found. The example I have in mind being "Tibo, Teebo, Thibo, Thibolt, Teabeau, Tibeault," and so on. Also, the name "Faulkner" is commonly pronounced and sometimes spelled "Fortner" in these parts, and I know the sons of a man who spell their name "Darity" as their father did because he thought it was too much trouble to spell it "Daugherity" as he had been taught. I think these variations commonly occur when a family goes through a period of illiteracy or semi-literacy, and lose the former spelling. At any rate, my thanks to Mr. Kuhlhoff for his interest, and I'll be looking forward to seeing his drawing of the knife.

Anyone else got a more *reason*able explanation of the variations?

PHILADELPHIA'S Pen and Pencil Club, oldest newspapermen's club in the country, was destroyed by fire on Christmas Day. Up in the blaze went oil paintings of Presidents and Vice Presidents, the club's charter, which was signed in 1892, plus innumerable caricatures of noted guests and members—among the latter, we presume, those of Collie Ives, Max Sax, Lee Bailey, Ace Carter, Mere-

dith Miller and sundry other nonesuch newshounds you've encountered in these pages via Franklin Gregory's "Blue Pencil Club" stories. For, of course, as Philadelphia Newsman Gregory confessed when he introduced himself in this department on the appearance of the first story in the series, the Pen and Pencil was the model for his Blue Pencil organization. We were sorry to hear that our fictional prototype parent group's quarters had come to such a pyrotechnic end but Author Gregory assures us his select coterie of never-never-land newsmen have found another meeting place where they can drink and yarn and lie to each other to their heart's content. The Blue Pencil Club, fortunately, still remains open for business and more stories set there will be coming along shortly.

THE controversy sparked by E. H. Douglas's letter to Author Giff Cheshire which we printed in this department in the January issue, and Cheshire's reply which accompanied it, has drawn some additional correspondence—pro and con—on the subject of boiler explosions in steamboats of the early days. For instance, the following from Hapsburg Liebe, of our *Ask Adventure* staff—

In the Jan. *Camp-Fire* there's a lot of talk about old boilers blowing up. I've seen old sawmill boilers go—and for the same reasons steamboat boilers went, in many cases, I'm sure. Letting the water get low, so low (out of sight in the glass gage) that it was converted into steam faster than it could be used up; possibly a stuck safety valve, or one that wouldn't let the overplus of steam out fast enough; throwing cold water into the overhet boiler at such a time is just about fatal; best thing to do is to draw the fire and pray hard. The old boilers were round, lay horizontally. A foot of water in the middle of the boiler was very much more than a foot of water in the bottom of the boiler, you see; so low water was used up very fast, and a little water makes steam in a very hot boiler a very great deal faster than a lot of water. Only a careless fireman takes his eye off the glass gage for long! A boiler foaming may make the gage show full, or almost full, when the water is really down below the danger point. Foaming water pulled over into the steam engine makes it knock a little, and the wise fireman would notice it. Also he'd know foaming water when he saw it in the glass gage. Certain kinds of water are more apt to foam than other kinds. I knew one boiler that went up from foaming because the fool fireman in washing up the night before had dropped a cake of soap in the injector barrel and hadn't fished it out. Another kind of foaming was supposed to be caused by something (I can't remember just what) that was put into the boiler to stop leaks—water, not steam—water leaks can be taken up, but not steam leaks. It should be borne in mind also that many of the old boilers were made of cheap stuff, and were rarely if ever inspected for soundness.

As to rivets melting in a boiler with water in it, I doubt that. Certainly they wouldn't melt if they were below the water line.

Incidentally, I read the story that began this, and thought—and still think—it was a really good story; I enjoyed the yarn.

And this from L. H. Joy of N. Havre, Montana—

Have just read the exchange of correspondence between E. H. Douglas and Giff Cheshire re "A Mug at Charley's," in the January issue. Referring to boiler explosions we must take note of several things. First, the water used. In the early days it most likely was used raw; no analysis or treatment of any kind. A lot of it would foam like beer, some not too bad, but practically all of it to a certain extent. The water glass is not a true indicator of the water level in the boiler, neither is a gauge-cock, as they both are tapped into the boiler head direct and the foamier the water is, the higher it will climb the boiler sheets before tumbling back. The water glass and the gauge-cock show more nearly the height of this foamy mass than the actual water level. So they never knew positively whether there was water over the crown sheet or not. As long as the throttle is open, the foam has a tendency to work up and keep the crown sheet wet. But as soon as the throttle is shut off for any reason, the water will settle. The crown sheet is dry and absorbs the heat of the fire and there is no way of dissipating it as there would be if it was covered with water. Don't misunderstand me, the crown sheet could become dry without closing the throttle. The water level could drop low enough so even the foam could not cover all of the crown sheet. (Crown sheet is that part of the boiler directly over the fire.)

Second, the temperature of the water at boiling point. At atmospheric pressure, water boils at 212°F. at sea level, 3000 ft. over sea level water boils at about 206°F. Suppose it were possible to transport a kettle of boiling water from sea level to 3000 ft. above sea level in nothing flat; the water would immediately burst into steam requiring cubic capacity 1800 times that of the tea kettle in which the water was, result an explosion! Now, the boiling point of water becomes higher as the pressure increases, so that no matter what pressure is being carried in a boiler, if that pressure is suddenly dropped—the water being at an exceedingly high temperature compared to the new pressure, immediately bursts into steam creating an ex-

ceedingly high pressure that is too high for the boiler. Now comes the explanation of what causes the sudden drop in pressure.

The overheated crown sheet is held in place by rods of various names—some reach straight up to the top sheet of the boiler, some slant to the side sheets, some slant to the back sheet and I have no doubt that in the old days of short coupled boilers, they may have had rods reaching from the back sheet to the front sheet. The overheated crown sheet becomes annealed; that is the molecules of the metal are re-distributed or rather evenly distributed so that it loses its grip on the rods and eventually sags and breaks under the steam pressure. If the injectors or pumps manage to get relatively cold water up to the crown sheet just before this last occurs, the sudden contraction of the metal will cause it to pull apart at its weakest point, the pressure drops suddenly, as the steam finds the rupture, the water with its exceedingly high temperature bursts into steam. This last is the real explosion not the first gush of boiler pressure steam. Although the two come so close together—well, there's no fun in it.

"Slacking speed with a full head of steam was considered a very dangerous practice" page 39, column 2, line 15. As I have already pointed out, closing the throttle allows the foam to subside. When water foams badly, the engineer demands that the water level be kept as low as possible in order to keep it from slopping over into the steam pipes leading to the valves and cylinders, which if it did slop over, would wash off the lubrication in these parts and could break out a cylinder head, by trapping so much water between the piston and cylinder head and not being able to get rid of it, that something has to go and as a rule it is the cylinder head.

Rivets, studs, bolts, etc., do not melt with fire on one side and water on the other. The water circulates the heat, thereby keeping the metal down to a safe temperature, but metal can become so encrusted with scale that the heat cannot be carried away fast enough and the metal becomes too hot and anneals, causing a failure. Safety valves are certainly not insurance against an explosion. The capacity of the safety valve is infinitesimally small when compared to the amount of steam generated in an explosion. I once stood by a boiler that carried 1600 lbs. pressure. If the boiler is built to carry high pressure that pressure will not cause it to explode. It is a sudden drop in pressure and the resulting bursting into steam of the water on account of exceedingly high temperature that constitutes an explosion.

Hope this will help.

* * *

P.S. My pet peeve against writers of instructions is that they invariably write on the assumption that the reader will know something about the subject being explained. The writer has the subject clear in his mind and overlooks the fact that a good percentage of his readers maybe knows nothing at all about it and so is unable to get the picture the instructor is trying to draw. So I let a young lad who knows nothing of boilers read this letter and next day asked him what caused a boiler to explode and from our conversation I took it that I went too much into detail, so that he didn't know any more after reading it than before. So here goes a condensed version which without that detailed explanation would have to be accepted on trust or discarded as merely a theory.

> "The part of a boiler which forms the firebox lets go in one place or another, the steam rushes out, lowering the pressure. The water being at a much higher temperature than the boiling point of this lower pressure, immediately bursts into steam which calls for a cubic-space 1800 times larger than that occupied by the water."

What happens? I'll leave it to your imagination.

Thanks, Mr. Joy, for such a lucid explanation of the various factors that must be considered when keeping a boiler fired safely and efficiently. And we know now why those rivets gave in the boiler in Mr. Cheshire's yarn despite the presence of water in the boiler. They were so encrusted with scale that the heat couldn't be carried away fast enough!

P. J. FERRIERE, Box 163, Commack, N. Y., has a request to make from some long-memoried reader. He writes—

> On or about July 21, 1918 the U. S. S. *West Over* (Army Cargo and Supply Ship) was torpedoed and sunk in the Bay of Biscay 470 nautical miles from Brest, France.
>
> (I was on that ship—U. S. Navy Armed Guard.)
>
> My inquiry to you is this:
>
> In an issue of *Adventure* in, I believe, *The Camp-Fire*, was a story and details regarding a German submarine captain who gave his name and related that his sub was the one that had sunk the *West Over*. He named his sub as the U 58 or near that number.
>
> Can anyone help me recall what issue carried that item?
>
> At one time a notice appeared in the magazine asking all survivors of the *West Over* to attend a meeting to be held in Philadelphia. Where can I find out if this group is still in existence?
>
> Eleven were lost out of a crew of 93. Thirteen Regular Navy men including myself. Ship sank in 26 minutes. We were five days in a lifeboat.

Unfortunately our *Camp-Fire* contents had never been adequately indexed or cross-filed for reference purposes. Can anyone help Mr. Ferriere contact his old shipmates?—K.S.W.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

A FEW additional highlights on flash photography.

Dear Mr. Anderson:—I have read your reply to Mr. Eldon B. Greenland in the December 1946 issue of *Adventure* in which you advise Mr. Greenland relative to certain characteristics of flash bulbs.

Let me ask that you do not interpret this letter as an argument with the experts but, if I may quote your own parenthetical statement, "this has never happened to me," I may be able to furnish you with information that may at some future time supplement your own experience or at least show you the possibilities inherent in flash bulbs.

I have just come from a meeting of men who, like myself, have shot some few flash bulbs and I deliberately chose at random a photographer who has fired fewer of these bulbs than I have, in order that I might get an equitable example. This man has experienced ever more dangerous failures than I have and his experience is not unusual after all.

All the men questioned have had bulbs break and shower particles at quite some distance and in my particular experience, I have had certain (maker's name on request) brand bulbs not only fracture and break, but actually explode with the sound of a .38 revolver cartridge. This having happened to me twice in a row with the same brand bulbs, has caused me to junk a case of bad bulbs and to adopt, a strict rule of not firing a bulb at an animate subject at a distance of less than eight feet without a screen in front of the reflector.

It will be at once suggested that the bulbs had been roughly handled but it is an established habit of mine to handle bulbs much in the manner and with the same care I give my other precision equipment, realizing they are fragile. It would follow then that while this may never happen again, it has already removed the qualification from your statement that, "there is no chance of a bulb exploding."

I am quite pleased, however, with one part of your advice to Mr. Greenland: to have the room well lighted in order to stop down the subject's pupils to avoid the staring effect. I have found this to be one of the most objectionable effects of flash shots, particularly of babies, since it is my contention the picture cannot be balanced. To me, the rest of the illumination is incompatible wth the wide aperture of the pupils, thus setting up the question: "What the hell is this?"

Forgive me for treading on one of your beliefs which in this case is not controversial but one which has not, fortunately, been your bad lot to experience. Incidentally, if you will examine the jacket of most GE bulbs, you will find the manufacturer's notice to the effect that such an event may take place.

In the interest of the finest of all modern hobbies, and improved flash shots, I am

Most sincerely yours,

—W. Lee Harrington
Kansas City, Misouri

Reply by Paul L. Anderson:—Thank you very much for your nice letter concerning my *A. A.* reply to Mr. Eldon Greenland.

A few years ago, it was by no means uncommon for a flash bulb to shatter when fired, but those of the present day are greatly improved over the old ones, one of the improvements consisting of a plastic coating on

the outside of the glass, precisely to prevent shattering. Using the modern bulbs, I have never known one to shatter, nor have I been able to find any user of flash bulbs who has known this to happen; they sometimes crack, but do not shatter, so far as I have been able to find out. And since Mr. Greenland was inquiring about bulbs for present use, I felt justified in replying to him as I did. I am inclined to think that the disclaimer printed on the package is a hold-over from the old days, and is simply carried, today, on general principles, like the standard disclaimer on film packages.

However, I thank you for your interest in the matter, and for letting me know of your experience. I am sending your letter to *Adventure,* and expect that it will be published for the general benefit of their readers.

LESSONS in Basic Polynesian.

Query:—Following my separation from the service and two or three years in college, I shall visit several islands in the South Pacific. Chief among these, the Marquesas, Tongas and Paumotus.

I touched briefly at Pago-Pago and Papeete during a cruise in 1943, and spent some time in the Gilbert Islands following the battle for Tarawa Atoll. Otherwise, I have had very little opportunity to study the languages of Polynesian or Micronesian natives.

I have written to the United States Bureau of Education for information concerning courses in the Malay-Polynesian or kindred languages. I hope to spend a year or more in the study of a basic language before I embark on this projected tour.

I am aware of the many difficulties involved in such an enterprise but if a year's work can make it a bit easier for me to master the several dialects, I shall feel fully repaid for the effort.

Under the circumstances what would you consider a basic language—one which embraces the greatest population? Some writers contend that Maori or Hawaiian are excellent for beginners.

Yours is a grand country, sir, and your countrymen are most courteous. I spent several very pleasant months at Paekakariki, near Wellington, with the Second Marine Division.

—Marshall D. Early
Sergeant, U.S.M.C.
San Diego, California

Reply by Tom L. Mills:—Yours is a most interesting and ambitious program. And as original research is the spirit of the age, I wish you happy landing and full success. You will have to consult higher authorities than my own and my circle of men interested in the vast area of the islands of the Pacific in finding whether there is a basic language from which you can obtain first aid in tackling offshoots and dialects. The language of the natives of New Zealand (the Maori) for instance, is a subsidiary. The original and valiant aborigines who came across the Parific (from whence?) brought a mixture, but retained what they brought by the use of a memory system that outpelmans Pelman. Their chieftains to this day can recite their genealogies because their educators, the priests (*tohungas*) trained their memories. And as they came over 600 years ago—that is some system! The best and most direct advice that I can give you in regard to your ambition is to write to: The Director, Paclfic Relations Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii.

A notable Maori who became some years ago a representative of his race in the New Zealand Parliament, Dr. Buck, was appointed a few years ago Director of the Institute at Honolulu. I knew him when I was a member of the Press Gallery in our Parliament. A fine man—think he is now a Prof. in one of the United States Universities—on loan. Should your sphere of study extend to the New Hebrides—condominium, France and Britain—I have a friend on Tongoa Isle, one of the largest of the group. He is the Rev. Graham Miller, Presbyterian missionary. If you have need to write him, mention my name. By the way, when you were encamped at Paekakariki, did you ever come over to Feilding, New Zealand, with comrades? Our Mayor, big Tom Seddon, thinks he has met you and sends regards. Tom is our local authority on the Maori.

AIR-COOLING a pressurized cabin in the clouds.

Query:—From time to time I read about a machine called a "refrigerator turbine" that is used to cool the compressed air used in pressurized cabins of high-altitude airplanes. I have been trying to find out how they work. Maybe you could tell me how they work and could refer me to something in print that would go completely into the thermo-dynamics of the operation.

I know the compressed air is expanded through the turbine before it is let into the cabin but that does not answer the question as to where they get rid of the heat. In order to have less heat in the exhaust gas than there is in the working gas the heat has to be taken out in the form of power, that is according to the way I have learned it so far. I can't get any dope on how this heat is extracted or dissipated.

I would appreciate any references to published articles or books that will enlighten me.

—Bill Gianella
1042-59th Street,
Oakland 8, California

Reply by O. B. Myers:—In reply to your letter inquiring about the 'refrigerator turbine' for supplying compressed air to pressurized cabins, I am afraid that you will find no publications giving exact details of these compressors.

Pressurized cabins were not in use on military airplanes during the war; they were

(Continued on page 143)

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Health-Building Activities, Hiking — DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, 3225 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 8, Wis.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, care of *Adventure.*

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trials—ROY S. TINNEY, Chatham, New Jersey.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—MAJOR R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure.*

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, care of *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *Birds, their habits, and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure.*

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling:—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.*

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESEBERG, care of *Adventure.*

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 14 N. Burnett St., East Orange, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A., Ret., care of *Adventure.*

United States Marine Corps—MAJ. ROBERT H. RANKIN, U.S.M.C.R., care of *Adventure.*

United States Navy—LIEUT. DURAND KIEFER, U.S.N., Ret., Box 74, Del Mar, Calif.

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, care of *Adventure.*

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGES SURDEZ, care of *Adventure.*

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure.*

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure.*

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley, N. S. W., Australia.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya—GORDON MACCREAGH, care of *Adventure.* **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange ree State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDEL, care of *Adventure.* **4** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure.* **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

Europe, Part 1 ★*The British Isles*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W.C. 2, England. **2** *Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure.*

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure.*

South America Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure.*

★West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure.*

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of *Adventure.*

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** *Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Campeche*—CAPTAIN W. RUSSELL SHEETS, care of *Adventure.* **3** ★ *West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa. Central and Southern Mexico including Tabasco and Chiapas*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Club Americano, Bolivar 31, México, D.F.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **3** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping* — A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd. (Forest Hill), Toronto, Ont., Canada. **5** ★*Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C. **6** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure.* **3** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 720 W. New York Ave., Albuquerque, N. M. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, Holbrook Tribune-News, Holbrook, Arizona. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River*—GEO. A. ZERR, 31 Cannon St., Pittsburgh, 5, Penna. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis. Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C.; S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure.* **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 140)

then, and still are, very much in the experimental stage. Trials are being carried on with various types, no one model has been settled on, and the commercial manufacturers are of course doing their own research along these lines.

As for theory, you are correct in stating that compression of the air results in a rise in temperature, and that a certain amount of heat must be taken out in order to keep the exhaust temperatures from getting too high for comfort. Even if the air is first over-compressed, and then allowed to expand, there is still a differential of energy to be removed or dissipated. This is a problem in stationary compressors, especially multi-stage units producing high pressure differentials, and is usually taken care of by water-jacketing between stages.

It is not, however, a serious problem, in aircraft at altitudes. In the first place, the pressure differential between inlet and exhaust is not so great, until you begin to get into the theoretical possibilities of flight above 50,000 feet. Secondly, the volume is small; after the cabin is once raised to the necessary pressure level, it is only necessary to supply enough air to compensate for leaks and needed ventilation. Thirdly, there is plenty of cold air available for cooling purposes; since the outer temperatures, at any altitude requiring cabin compression, are always far below zero, it is no problem to keep the compressor cool. For this same reason, a certain increase in temperature is required, and welcome; the air supplied to the cabin must be heated as well as compressed, for comfort's sake.

You will find in your local library any number of books on thermo-dynamic theory. There is an excellent one by Joeph H. Keenan, though without previous study of physics and calculus, you will find it heavy going. Frank D. Graham has written on the subject of air compressors, as has Eugene Feller. See if you can get hold of a copy of "Steam, Air, and Gas Power" by Severns & Degler. This goes into the practical thermo-dynamics of air compression, though only with reference to operation on the ground. As I said before, the subject of high-altitude compression is too new to be completely covered by any published works.

FREE to AMBITIOUS MEN and WOMEN— THIS BOOK!

Send today for this FREE book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays."

A full explanation of what you must know to be an accountant, opportunities in this well-paying, fascinating field, and how you can, in your spare time, prepare yourself for a better job and more money. A preliminary knowledge of bookkeeping is unnecessary. We train you from the ground up, or start with what you already know, according to your individual needs.

Under the LaSalle Problem Method you can acquire at home, a thorough understanding of Higher Accountancy, master its fundamental principles, become expert in the practical application of these principles. Your training will be under the direct supervision of a staff of Certified Public Accountants, and members of the American Institute of Accountants.

Get all the facts NOW. Our book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays" is FREE. Write for it today. **G. I. APPROVED.**

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

A Correspondence Institution

417 S. Dearborn St. Dept. 4334-H Chicago 5, Ill.

LAW STUDY AT HOME FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS and LARGER EARNINGS, 38 years expert instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. Send for FREE BOOK—"Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW!

AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
Dept. 76-B, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

This Easy Way
TEACHES GUITAR
to Your Satisfaction in 30 Days Or Money Back

Astounding new Jim Major Home Method teaches you to play guitar easily, quickly, without long hours practicing scales or exercises. *No musical knowledge necessary.* Play many popular songs, hymns in very short time. 30 lessons, complete course for only $1.69. EXTRA—BIG 53 SONG BOOK included without additional cost. Send no money . . . pay postman $1.69 plus postage. (Cash with order we pay postage.) Money back guarantee. Send today to Jim Major, Room 18-D, 230 East Ohio, Chicago 11, Ill.

How to Start YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Amazing Postwar Development Now Gives You the Opportunity to Make Money Fast!

Startling scientific discovery, just now becoming available for general use, will enable you to start your business and reap great profits! Plastics, one of the most revolutionizing and rapidly expanding industries, offers a great opportunity to all enterprising men and women. This is one of the few industries in which home manufacturers thrive and prosper. You can start even on a spare time basis in your own home, and expand rapidly into a full time business, paying good profits.

LIQUID MARBLE

Make LIQUID MARBLE the amazing Plastic, with a thousand uses. LIQUID MARBLE can be poured into FLEXIBLE MOLDS for casting all kinds of artistic and serviceable articles such as: ornaments, novelties, desk sets, paper weights, book-ends, souvenirs, statuary, toys, etc.

FLEXIBLE MOLDS

Make your own FLEXIBLE MOLDS. The cost is low—in fact, a large sized mold costs but a few cents. Hundreds of casts can be taken from a single mold.

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!

No skill or previous knowledge is necessary. All you do is follow our easy-to-understand instructions.

UNLIMITED MARKET

The market is literally unlimited. You will find steady year-round demand in your own community. Your problem will not be in selling but in supplying the huge pent-up demand. Moreover, we supply you with names of big buyers for your finished products.

WRITE TODAY

Bing Products will show you how to start with a small investment and build a permanent, independent, profitable business! Don't fail to grasp this opportunity! Write today for FREE CATALOG.

BING PRODUCTS
Dept. M2, 88 Broad Street, BOSTON 10, MASS.

High School Course at Home — Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-449, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

Learn modern watch and clock repairing

At home, spare time. Good field now ... security and contentment in future. Start part-time business and **EARN while you learn.** Horology is precision instrument work... a great and growing field, sensational opportunities. Easy self-instruction course. Low price. **Money-back guarantee.** Write today for **FREE** Success-Catalog!

NELSON CO. 1139 South Wabash Avenue Dept. D05, Chicago 5, Ill.

MECHANICS • HOME STUDY

Step up your own skill with facts & figures of your trade. Audels Mechanics Guides contain Practical Inside Trade Information in handy form. Fully illustrated. Easy to Understand. Highly Endorsed. Check book you want for 7 days' Free Examination. Send no Money. Nothing to pay postman. ☐Carpentry $6 • ☐Auto $4 • ☐ Oil Burners $1 ☐Sheet Metal $1 • ☐Welding $1 • ☐Refrigeration $4 ☐Plumbing $6 • ☐Masonry $6 • ☐Painting $2 • ☐Radio $4 ☐Electricity $4 • ☐Mathematics $2 • ☐Steam Engineers $4 ☐Machinist $4 • ☐Blueprint $2 • ☐Diesel $2 • ☐Drawing $2. If satisfied you pay only $1 a month until price is paid.

AUDEL, Publishers, 49 W. 23 St., New York 10, N. Y.

BIGGER PAY THRU SPARE TIME TRAINING

A better job—more money can be yours if you are ready. Prepare now in spare time and reap the rewards of early success. Free 48-page books tell how. Check the book in the business field you like—write your name and address on margin of this ad and mail. Do it now. G. I. APPROVED.

☐Higher Accountancy ☐Business Management
☐Traffic Management ☐Salesmanship
☐Law—Degree of LL.B. ☐Expert Bookkeeping
☐Commercial Law ☐C. P. A. Coaching
☐Stenotypy (Machine Shorthand)

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
A Correspondence Institution
417 So. Dearborn St. Dept. 4334R Chicago 5, Ill.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

W. H. McCarty, 965 Clinton St., Napa, California wants information of his two brothers, A. W. McCarty, whose nickname is "Buck" and W. F. McCarty, sometimes called "Bill."

I would appreciate any information as to the whereabouts of Joseph R. Connolly, formerly of Westfield, N. J., who has lived in and around Los Angeles since the summer of 1938. He was drafted into the U. S. Army in the early part of World War II. He was in the Air Corps at Hamilton Field, California and at Hammond Field, California. After being discharged he resided for a time in Los Angeles and later became a civilian employee at a U. S. Naval Construction Unit at Inyokern, California. His father died and I would like to get in touch with him. Please write to J. R. Cummings, 329a Arlington Avenue, Jersey City, N. J.

Have any of you ETO men seen Lt. John Donnell Stroud (Johnny, John D. or Donn) formerly pilot in 556th Sqdn., 387th Bomb. Group, 9th Air Force. About 23 years old now, 6' 1", weight 140 lbs. Thin brown hair, brown eyes. He may be blind and badly burned; was shot down 6 miles southwest of Amberg, Germany on April 9, 1945. Lt. Gerald Swift (Jerry or Swifty) may be with him, anywhere in Europe. Please write to his parents. C. B. Stroud, R. 1, Box 354, Coral Ridge, Ky.

Any person who was at Lamberts Point Degaussing Station, E.Y.P.S., N.O.B., Norfolk, Virginia during the period from June 1944 to July 1945 for any length of time, please communicate with Edward A. Steacy, (E.M. 3/c) 10 Hopson St., Utica, N. Y.

Would greatly appreciate learning of the whereabouts of Harry (Gus) Stewart, Richard Donato and Sgt. Zimmer all at No. 2 Hospital, Det. Med. Dept., Fort Bragg, N. C. Stewart was from Philadelphia, Donato from New York and Zimmer from somewhere in the Middle West. All served in EENT, in 1942 and 1943. Dr. James O. Baxter, Jr., 1500 Front St., Beaufort, N. C.

(Continued from page 85)

They stopped at Riley's, a steak house that catered to the trade. Coston got out. He said, "Keep an eye on him." Kraus did not answer. He stared at Burke.

Burke said, "Tell Willy I said it's O.K. to give you the dope."

Coston walked away.

Quigg could be gone. He might have taken a plane out of town. He might have dropped dead.

Coston was not long. He came out, got into the cab but left the door open. He said, "Burke, you're lucky. A man loses his money, I got to figure he's on the level. But if I were you I wouldn't fight again. You don't figure them so good."

Burke thought of the hand. He wouldn't be fighting again.

Coston said, "So long, Burke."

Burke got out. He looked at Coston and said nothing. He looked at Kraus. The man stared at him silently. He walked away without closing the door. The hell with them. Let them do a little work themselves.

The night was suddenly huge and without shadow. He walked down the street and fear had left his side. He thought of the fight for a moment and grinned. Then he remembered the five thousand, and the grin faded. He liked a dollar as well as the next man.

But it was the cheapest five thousand he had ever spent. Easily the cheapest. Losing money was never a smart trick, but this was an exception.

He walked down the street and thought of Milly for a little while, and then he began to think about the laundry business.

THE END

GET INTO **RADIO TELEVISION ELECTRONICS NOW!**

INTERESTING JOBS — GOOD PAY — EARN WHILE YOU LEARN — A BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN, are just a few of the opportunities awaiting you as a Trained National Radio, Television and Electronic Expert. Broadcasting, Radio Service, and other specialized phases are constantly demanding more and more trained men. **Get all the facts about this GREAT FIELD. ACT AT ONCE!**

SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING

By a Real Established Resident Trade School With Classrooms, FM Studios, Shops & Laboratories

gives you the knowledge, skill, and experience that assures definite progress—step-by-step for a brighter, more prosperous future. **You Learn by Doing.** Build a standard LONG DISTANCE SUPERHETERODYNE RECEIVER as shown above, an audio oscillator, a signal generator (low powered Radio transmitter) and many other units and experiments with equipment furnished you in your home. National Graduates everywhere have qualified, **through spare time study** for well-paying jobs, success and security in Radio. It is a field with a proved future. Find out what this industry offers National Trained Service Engineers, Operators and Technicians. Take the first step to greater success NOW by sending coupon below—TODAY!

FREE LESSON

NATIONAL SCHOOLS
LOS ANGELES 37, CALIFORNIA

MAIL COUPON

National Schools, Dept. 4-P.P.
4000 S. Figueroa Los Angeles 37, Calif.
Mail me sample lesson and book **FREE.** Paste on a post card

NAME..... AGE.....
ADDRESS.....
CITY..... ZONE.... STATE.....
☐ Check here if Veteran of World War II

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD!
TRAIN FOR A FUTURE IN
DIESEL

● Prepare for the big earning power of **Diesel Trained Men.** Start learning at home, in spare time. UEI's easy, practical training covers all phases of DIESEL engine operation, fuel systems, auxiliary equipment, repairs and maintenance. When home course is completed, you come to Chicago for actual shop practice on DIESEL MOTORS under expert instructors, at UEI's fine, modern school.

BEGIN AT ONCE—GET ALL THE FACTS FREE. WRITE TODAY!

DIESEL DIVISION **UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE**
1314 Belden Avenue • Dept. 1147-D • Chicago 14, Illinois

Now A DYNAMIC HEAVY DUTY INDUSTRIAL WELDER

FOR ONLY **$23.50** COMPLETE...

IDEAL FOR AUTO - HOME APPLIANCE AND FARM REPAIRS

DESIGNED TO DO HIGH GRADE WELDING INEXPENSIVELY—Maintenance Men; Farmers; Mechanics; Machine Shops; Foundries; Auto, General Repair and Job Welding Shops; all using the DYNAMIC find it so indispensable and useful that they cannot afford to be without it. If inexperienced, you can easily learn to do a variety of high grade welding jobs by following the practical, simplified operating and welding instructions furnished. Once you see a DYNAMIC in operation, you won't want to be without it. Its simplicity will amaze you. In a year the DYNAMIC only costs you about 6c a day. Helmet, rods, cables, holder and operating instructions, etc., furnished.

SAVES YOU VALUABLE TIME AND MONEY!

This portable DYNAMIC WELDER—easily carried to the job—can be operated from any convenient, properly wired 110 volt, 60 cycle line. Can also be supplied for 220 volt, 60 cycle operation and for other voltages and cycles at slight additional cost. Works on IRON, STEEL, BRASS, BRONZE, AND OTHER METALS—has 8 metallic and carbon arc welding heat stages—does work you would think only possible with larger more expensive machine.

DYNAMIC WELDER CO. • 13 East 23rd St., NM, Chicago 16, Ill.

COMPLETE... AVAILABLE NOW IMMEDIATE DELIVERIES

WRITE TODAY FOR PARTICULARS

Get details on our 10 day trial offer

Member Chicago Association of Commerce

Beautiful Hand Painted Wallets

1.98

Money Back If Not Satisfied

Joyously designed with a Hawaiian flair, it boasts 8 picture holders, identification card pocket, roomy change and bill compartments, and an all-round zipper.

Send $1.98 plus 20% Federal Tax, total $2.38, we pay postage. Or order C.O.D. pay postman $2.38 plus postage.

ACME LEATHER MFG. CO.
1472 Broadway, Dept. MP-1, New York 18, N. Y.
Agents' Inquiries Invited

Get into Good Paying
AUTO BODY *and* FENDER WORK

BIG DEMAND in Auto Body and Fender work. Start training now in your spare time at home for good pay work. Practical shop experience included. U. E. I. Training covers metal work, welding, painting, etc. Placement service—or we will show you how to start your own shop. Behind U. E. I. TRAINING is a large national organization founded 1927. Write today for FREE FACTS—No obligation.

Approved for Training under G.I. Bill

AUTO-CRAFTS DIVISION • UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE
1314 BELDEN AVENUE, DEPT. X-9V, CHICAGO 14, ILLINOIS

LAW . . .

STUDY AT HOME Legally trained men win higher positions and bigger success in business and public life. Greater opportunities now than ever before. More Ability: More Prestige: More Money We guide you step by step. You can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL.B. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 48-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send NOW. G. I. APPROVED.
LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, 417 South Dearborn Street
A Correspondence Institution Dept. 4334-L, Chicago 5, Ill.

"The D&H"

Boxcar Signature

EVER see this emblem on a freight car? It's the herald of the Delaware & Hudson, an up-to-the-minute transportation plant with a history as old as railroading. As part of its "Know your Railroads" program, Railroad Magazine brings you the whole colorful story of this progressive carrier in its April issue, now on the newsstands, 25c.

RAILROAD MAGAZINE
205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

HUNTING and FISHING

HUNTING & FISHING is a monthly magazine crammed full of hunting, fishing, camping dog and boating stories and pictures, invaluable information about guns, fishing tackle, game law changes, best places to fish and hunt—countless ideas that will add more fun to your days afield.

Special Trial Offer

Send 25c in stamps or coin and we will send you Hunting & Fishing for six months.

HUNTING & FISHING
MAGAZINE, 250 Sportsman's Bldg., Boston, Mass.

(Continued from page 123)

By this time I knew just how to wake the greyhound up. It still growled. But after I dragged it outside, and pulled it up the steep places, it followed us. Only this morning, instead of going to the top of the mountain, we went to the upper end of the wood lot. There were plenty of rabbits there. I could see their tracks all over. Below us we could hear Eely Moxer chopping into another tree.

"Let the greyhound loose, Alex."

I took the rope from the greyhound's neck, and for a second it reared with its front paws on a log, looking towards Eely Moxer. He had his chopping about done, and there were only two more trees to cut. But he had taken off his sheepskin coat and thrown it on the ground. The greyhound saw it, raced towards it, and lay down on the coat. Eely Moxer turned red, then purple. He kicked the greyhound in the ribs.

Never, in all my born days, have I seen a dog come awake any quicker. The greyhound reared up, bared its teeth, and started for Eely Moxer. Eely yelled once, and fat as he was, I think that not even a deer could have run through the woods any faster. He jumped for and caught the lower branches of one of the two trees that were left. But the greyhound was a real runner, too. He jumped, fastened his teeth in the seat of Eely's pants, and tore them out. Eely pulled himself a little higher.

"Ha!" said George. "I win! The greyhound did chase something!"

"Call him off!" Eely Moxer said.

But George, who thinks of everything, was passing a pencil and a sheet of paper into the tree.

"Just write on it," he said, "that the horses are all paid for. An' put it in writin' that you owe me a hundred dollars. Anybody would know that these logs is mine."

Eely wrote, and George smiled when he read the paper. I pulled the greyhound away. He rumbled a little when Eely climbed out of the tree. But I held him.

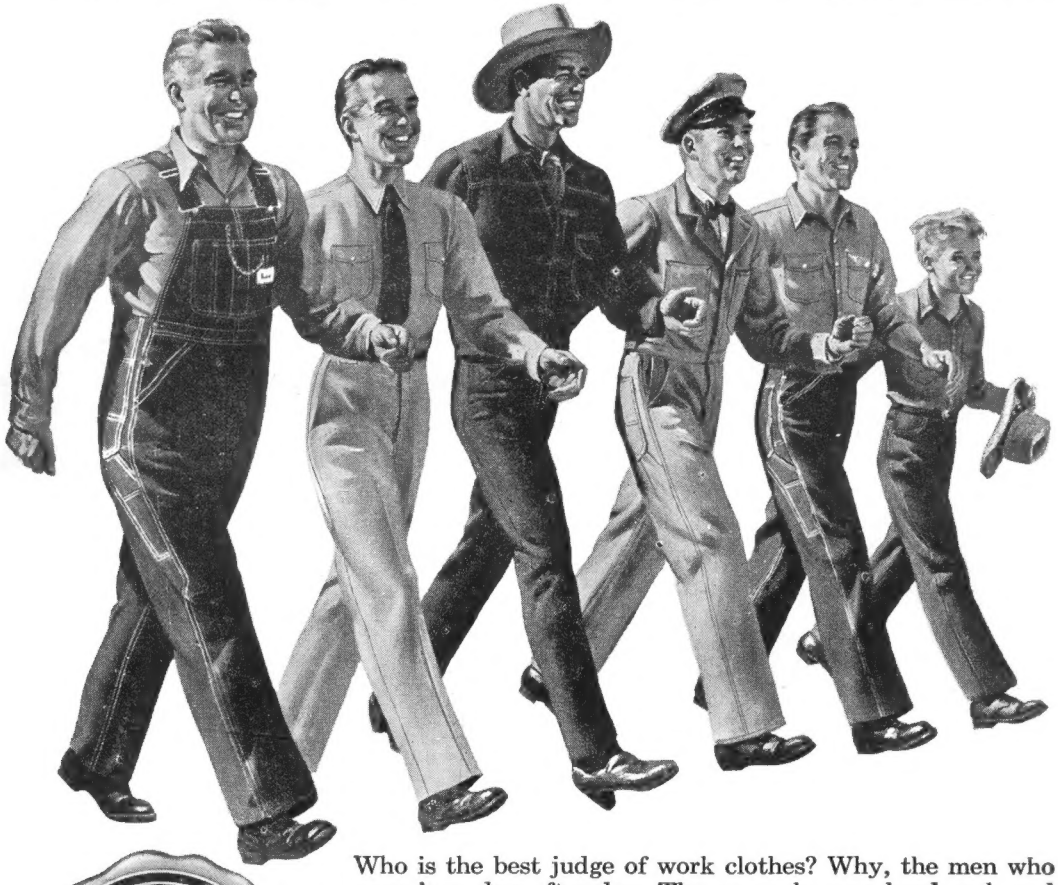
"Oh George!" I told my cousin. "You're wonderful! What are you going to do now?"

"Sleep," said George, "I'm tired."

THE END

Work Clothes Experts . . . The Men Who Wear 'em

Prefer Lee 6 to 1 OVER ANY OTHER BRAND



Who is the best judge of work clothes? Why, the men who wear 'em, day after day. The men who pay hard cash and want value in return.

It's men like that who have pointed to LEE as the best value for 8 straight years in a nation-wide survey* on the question: "What brand of overalls do you prefer?" For the past 2 years, LEE *has led the second brand by the amazing margin of 6 to 1.*

LEE leads because it gives top value in the things you want most in work clothes—LONG WEAR, GOOD FIT and COMFORT, PRACTICAL FEATURES. Buy LEE at leading stores, coast to coast.

**Survey conducted by prominent magazine publisher.*

UNION MADE
Lee
Highest Quality
WORK CLOTHES

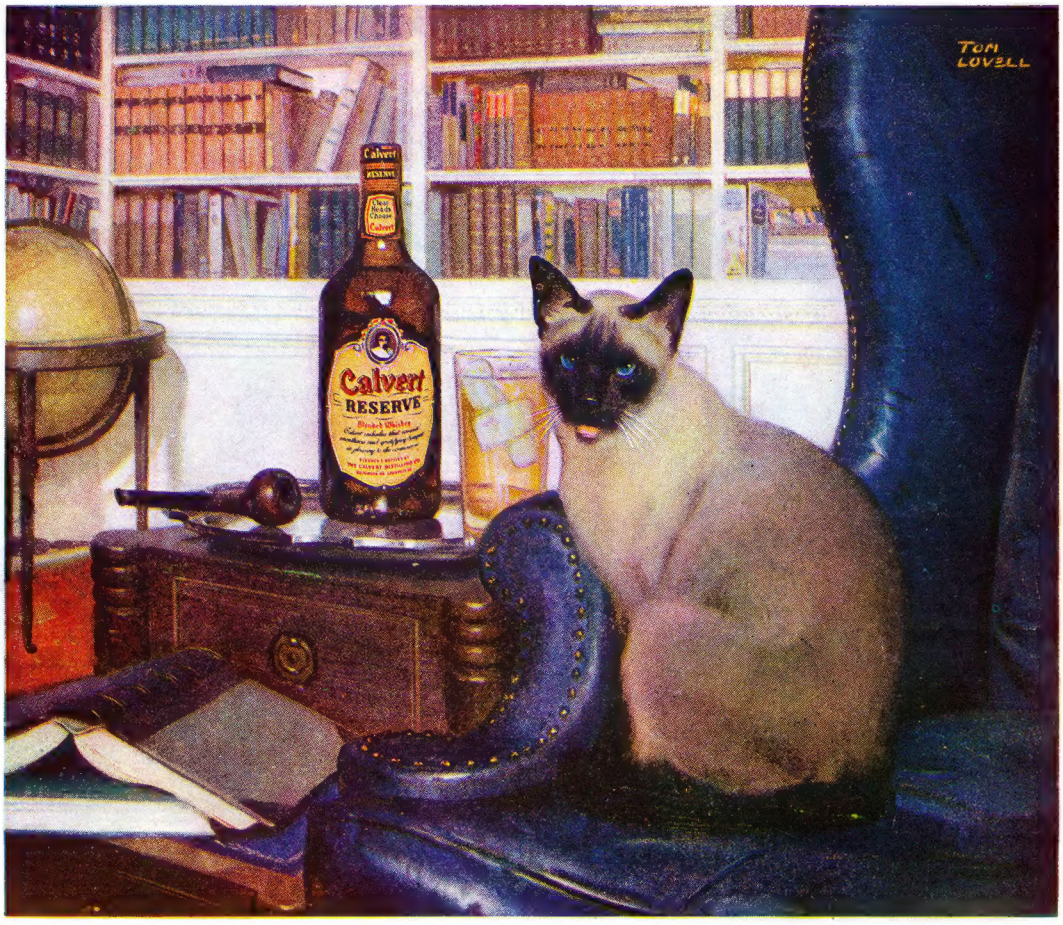
COPYRIGHT 1947
THE H. D. LEE CO., INC.

THE H. D. LEE CO., Inc.
Kansas City, Mo. • Minneapolis, Minn.
Trenton, N. J. • San Francisco, Calif.
South Bend, Ind. • Salina, Kansas

There's a LEE for Every Job!

JELT DENIM OVERALLS
UNIONALLS • MATCHED
SHIRTS AND PANTS • DUNGAREES • COWBOY PANTS

WORLD'S LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF UNION-MADE WORK CLOTHES



"Easy to see he's well educated!"

Why are wise folks switching to Calvert?
Because it's "the whiskey of moderation"...
blended for agreeable lightness... superb taste...
all-around whiskey enjoyment. We invite you to try it
and learn for yourself the pleasant reasons why...

Clear Heads Choose Calvert

Calvert
BLENDED WHISKIES
Reserve OR *Special*

Calvert Distillers Corp., N. Y. C. BLENDED WHISKEY 86.8 Proof.
Calvert "Reserve"—65% Grain Neutral Spirits... Calvert "Special"—72½% Grain Neutral Spirits